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New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . (Coté d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 23

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/487)

(b) Draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the support given to the economic and social reconstruction of Nicaragua and for the publication of his report (A/49/487).

Nicaragua was pleased when the General Assembly on 22 October 1993 adopted resolution 48/8, in which the Assembly, concerned at the fact that the recent natural disasters and the burden of foreign debt were impeding Nicaragua's efforts to overcome the consequences of the war within the framework of a democracy and in the macroeconomic conditions already achieved, requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system, to provide Nicaragua with all necessary assistance for its rehabilitation, reconstruction, stabilization and development, in order to render the peace and democracy achieved irreversible. In this context, we greatly appreciate the contributions of organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in various fields, as well as the initiatives supported by the international community.

The Government of the Republic of Nicaragua, with the assistance of democratic political forces, the support of our people and the solidarity of the international community, continues to make considerable efforts to overcome our main challenges: the consequences of the war, poverty and the natural disasters that have beset us.

Nicaragua faces major challenges. We have undergone a total transformation, so complex that it deserves special treatment. Our country is in the process of transition from totalitarianism to a participatory democracy, from a centralized economy to a market economy, from poverty to development, from war to peace and from confrontation to political and economic reintegration. Our Government has been promoting the process in a polarized society suffering from natural disasters that have worsened the country's already precarious economic and social situation.

The Government of Nicaragua, headed by Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, is involved in a broad reform process designed to achieve national reconciliation, pacification and economic and social development. Despite the difficulty of this process, we have been engaged in consultation, dialogue and joint

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action with various national political groups. There is no doubt that since 1990 Nicaragua has achieved a great deal in a number of these areas. Nevertheless, there have been substantial lags in other important sectors.

Considerable progress has been made in the pacification of the country, democratic practices have improved and today Nicaragua enjoys a greater degree of political freedom than in its entire history. In the economic sphere it has established a framework for a market economy, has achieved macroeconomic stabilization and has curbed hyperinflation.

The report submitted by the Secretary-General, without being exhaustive, highlights the considerable progress made in the political and economic fields as well as the fact that in some areas, mainly the social area, progress has lagged.

However, as the report indicates, despite the successes in the transition process, the country has not made as much progress as it would have liked in all areas. There is a considerable lag in the socio-economic field compared with the political and macroeconomic areas, which could cause considerable social friction. Therefore we need urgent action to achieve harmony. Here international cooperation must be adapted to the specific national situation by contributing to the formulation and implementation of measures designed to improve the standard of living of the majority of the population.

The close harmony that must exist between the process of political reconciliation and economic and social recovery is fundamental in order to consolidate the progress made in Nicaragua to date. This requires the sustained support of the international community.

In this context, we are grateful for the creation, with the support of the Secretary-General and on the basis of resolution 48/161 of 20 December 1993, of an active group of friendly countries composed of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. This Support Group is playing an extremely important role in helping to reactivate the economic and social development of our country, which will undoubtedly lead to the strengthening of our democracy and institutions.

Despite the achievements of the past three years, attaining Nicaragua's social and macroeconomic objectives for the period 1994-1997 depends on considerable external financing in the medium term. Even under certain optimistic scenarios, involving great fiscal discipline, important structural reforms and no delays in disbursements by international financial institutions, our country's international viability hinges to a large extent on finance obtained from a combination of external transfers and considerable reductions of Nicaragua's foreign debt, which at 31 December 1992 amounted to $11.126 billion, or $2,928 for each Nicaraguan.

Much of the progress in and the very future of consolidating our democracy hinges on urgently tackling this problem, which has placed Nicaragua in a much worse situation than that of any other country classified by the World Bank as a severely indebted low-income country. In 1992 the foreign debt was approximately 3,466 per cent of exports and 822 per cent of gross domestic product, while the amount needed for debt servicing was 344 per cent of exports or 23 times more than the average for the severely indebted low-income countries.

This disproportionate debt in a country that, because of conflict, has reduced levels of exports to approximately $300 million a year, makes Nicaragua an exceptional case requiring massive reductions in its foreign debt to ensure its medium-term viability. The international community's recognition of Nicaragua's exceptional situation is a key element in its growth and development prospects. Nicaragua appreciates this special status.

The Government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro continues to make great efforts to carry out an ambitious programme of economic and social reform. The main object of Nicaragua's economic programme for 1994-1997 is to consolidate the achievements of the years 1991-1993, to intensify the process of structural reforms required for the effective functioning of a competitive economy and to make progress towards viability in the international economy.

In the social sphere, the main social indicators of our country show that in 1994 50 per cent of the population lived in poverty, infant mortality was 72 per 1,000, and 28 per cent of children were undernourished. The Government therefore attaches the highest priority to strengthening a combination of institutional changes and to developing various social programmes. Foremost among them are projects to alleviate poverty in the short term.

The principal macroeconomic objectives of the programme are to create the foundations of sustained growth in real per capita income, to reduce inflation to single digits and to strengthen the reserves of the Central Bank. The Government programme also emphasizes development of the right climate for private investment and the expansion of employment in productive activities, thus improving the living conditions of the poorest sectors of the population.

Nicaragua is making important strides in structural adjustment and stabilization in a framework of political and economic democracy. However, 1994 and 1995 will be key years for Nicaragua, since we will be consolidating the foundations for a process of sustainable growth and recovery of national production and consumption. The recent signing of multilateral agreements shows the international community's firm support for the economic programme we have been implementing. That support will provide the funds to bring our balance of payments into equilibrium and carry out important economic and social projects.

Nicaragua will continue to implement suitable economic and social policies and to make the adjustments necessary to counteract the unfavourable impact of factors that have harmed the economy this year, such as the severe drought, which reduced the country's agricultural output, and electricity shortages that have affected the growth of economic activity this year. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Agriculture, productive areas lost through drought total some 256,853 *manzanas* of arable land, a loss that directly affects 135,104 producing families and has an indirect effect on 130,000 agricultural labourers who have lost their jobs owing to lack of work. If we take into account the fact that every family affected numbers at least five members, we see that the total number of persons affected is an estimated 675,520, or more than 25 per cent of the Nicaraguan population.

The Government of Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro will continue to make every effort necessary to promote greater respect for human rights, consolidate peace, establish a state of law and achieve progress towards stability. There will be improvements in the financial system, priority being given to public expenditure in those areas with the greatest social and economic impact, to the privatization and deregulation of publicly owned entities and to important advances in the process of reform and diminishing the role of the State. Similarly, the country will continue to improve methods of promoting confidence in the private sector so that investments there will help create more jobs and enable us to expand our production base. This process is being helped by the gradual progress being achieved in the settlement of ownership disputes and a greater strengthening of the climate of peace and security in the countryside.

However, the accumulated effect of natural disasters, the aftermath of the war and the resulting economic and social problems represents a tremendous obstacle to any real progress in development. Our experience demonstrates that peace-building in the aftermath of conflicts must be accompanied by global development efforts in the political, economic and social spheres and that the resources mobilized should be channelled to those efforts.

Nicaragua is grateful for the generous and effective response of the United Nations and the international community in mobilizing assistance to it. Such efforts will help to strengthen the direct link between democracy, peace and development.

My delegation, on behalf of all the sponsors, has the honour to introduce the draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1), "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters".

This draft resolution refers to an earlier resolution on the same subject and updates it, taking into account new elements that have emerged in Nicaragua. In this connection, we have included two new preambular paragraphs, one taking into account the central role of the Nicaraguan people and Government in seeking lasting solutions to consolidate the achievements of their transition and the other taking into account the commitments adopted by the Central American Presidents at the Central American Environment Summit for Sustainable Development, in which it was decided to give special attention to Nicaragua due to its exceptional situation.

The operative portion of the draft resolution is similar to that of General Assembly resolution 48/8, with a few additions and changes. The unanimous adoption of the draft resolution will be further demonstration of the political will of the international community to support Nicaragua's national reconciliation, peace-building, democracy and economic and social development, and will have a positive effect in consolidating a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central

America. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Flores Olea (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/49/487) entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", in which he gives an account of the support activities carried out by bodies of the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on behalf of Nicaragua.

In recent years we have witnessed the efforts made by Central American countries to overcome a period marked by violence, instability and shortage. Such efforts have called for goodwill from all sectors of society in those countries and the continued support of the international community.

In Central America there continue to be obstacles to consolidating the bases of stable economic and social development. In this connection, the international community must play a meaningful role in expanding and enhancing support for that region.

For Mexico, Central America is an area of priority interest because of our geographical proximity and our close historical and cultural links with that region. In this connection, my country has consistently engaged in cooperation activities designed to lend support to the recovery and economic and social development of the five countries of the region.

Today Nicaragua is facing major challenges in the economic, political and social sectors. It is therefore making tremendous efforts to reactivate those sectors. To the problems stemming from a prolonged period of armed conflict have been added others that are the result of various natural disasters, which have led to a further deterioration of the country's economic and social situation.

We should like to express our gratitude to the Government of Nicaragua for its efforts in the economic sphere to bring about macroeconomic stabilization and lay down firm bases for sustainable development. We must also emphasize the considerable progress made in the sphere of public finance, which has helped to bring about a drastic reduction in inflation from the levels of the last decade.

Nevertheless, the Secretary-General points out in his report that economic activity as a whole has not been sufficiently reactivated. The country has not been able to expand its participation in international markets to any significant extent, and its exports continue to lag behind imports; the balance of payments deficit is between $600 million and $700 million per year.

In the social sphere, as the report states, the situation gives grounds for concern. According to the Secretary-General's report, current per capita gross national product is at the level of least developed countries. Unemployment stands at 22.6 per cent; and underemployment at 20 per cent; 75 per cent of Nicaraguan families live below the poverty level, with 44 per cent in extreme poverty.

The report goes on to note that, in spite of the achievements in Nicaragua, the country has not been able to advance in all areas and that there is a lag in the socio-economic field in relation to the political and macroeconomic areas. Finally, the Secretary-General emphasizes the importance of international cooperation, which must be adapted to the national situation, and which requires special attention to the productive sector. This would have a positive, multiplier effect on the Nicaraguan economy.

Within its means, Mexico has provided and intends to continue providing support for Nicaragua. In the context of resolution 48/161, Mexico is participating in the Group of Friends set up by the Secretary-General to support the revitalization of economic and social development in Nicaragua. My country has instituted a number of support mechanisms involving both development projects and technical assistance activities. Thy include: the first agreement on financial cooperation between Mexico and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); the addendum to the second agreement on financial cooperation between Mexico and the CABEI; the Programme for the Financing of Central American Imports, which was intended to make $65 million in assistance available to Central American countries as from 1988; the Mexico-CABEI programme for professional development; and the Technical Cooperation Programme with Central America. Under the professional development programme, 92 Nicaraguans have been trained in Mexican public institutions since 1988.

We must recognize that the efforts of the people and the Government of Nicaragua will be more effective if the international community and the competent international organizations cooperate with it to consolidate its own economic, social and institutional objectives. Hence, we urge the international community and financial bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank to grant Nicaragua the favourable treatment its exceptional circumstances require.

We call on Member States to make an additional contribution to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Nicaragua through the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution before the Assembly.

Organization of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the Permanent Representative of Denmark, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, in a letter dated 15 November 1994, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See during the debate on agenda item 158, "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development", scheduled for today.

In another letter of the same date, the Permanent Representative of Denmark, also on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, requests that the Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of Switzerland during the debate on item 37, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", scheduled for Wednesday, 23 November, as well as during the debate on item 92, "Agenda for development", scheduled for Monday, 21 November.

Members will recall that, in accordance with established practice of the General Assembly, observer non-Member States may normally make statements only in the Main Committees. However, following consultations, and taking into account the importance attached to the issues under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on those requests.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See in the course of the debate on agenda item 158?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): Next, may I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of Switzerland during the course of the debate on agenda item 37 and on agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 23 (*continued*)

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/487)

(b) Draft resolution (A/49/L.25/Rev.1)

Mr. Maruyama (Japan) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation appreciates the efforts the Government of Nicaragua, led by President Chamorro, has been making to lay a durable foundation for democracy, market-oriented economic reform and reconstruction of the economy since the April 1990 peaceful transfer of power and the demobilization of the armed opposition.

We have been pleased by the improvements that have taken place in the political area, especially those which have strengthened democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and security. Economic reform has likewise been making progress, and in this connection my Government welcomes the announcement by the Government of Nicaragua that it intends to continue implementing the structural adjustment programme it undertook on the recommendation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

To support the Government of Nicaragua as it labours to further democracy and economic reform, donor countries and the international community must continue to provide the financial resources and technical assistance that the country needs and deserves.

For its part, Japan has given highest priority to support for efforts in those two areas in its programme of cooperation in Latin America and particularly in Central America. It has therefore endorsed the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua in both the political and economic spheres, and has provided it with a steady flow of support on the basis of its Official Development Assistance Charter. For example, my Government recently decided to lend the Government of Nicaragua $37.5 million for its Economic Reconstruction Programme II, and to provide it with extensive assistance to help it increase food production, rehabilitate its socio-economic infrastructure and improve its drinking-water supply system. Also, in the near future, my Government plans to send a high-level mission to Nicaragua to engage in a dialogue on Japan's medium- and long-term policy on economic cooperation with Nicaragua.

In closing, my delegation wishes once again to express its appreciation for the efforts the Government of Nicaragua is making to promote reconciliation, improve security, protect human rights and achieve an early solution to property disputes, and it urges the Government of Nicaragua to continue these efforts.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, Japan hopes that, with international support, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua will progress as rapidly as possible, and it is determined to play a significant role in that process.

Mr. Escobar (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for Colombia to support, under agenda item 23, the draft resolution entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". The exceptional circumstances experienced by that country make it necessary to lend continuing support to its rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Colombia has taken an active part in the Central American peace process, beginning with the Contadora Group and subsequently in the Rio Group. That Group's work was instrumental in arriving at the Esquipulas I and II agreements, which made possible the political viability of peace in the region and succeeded in ending the armed confrontation.

The time has now come for reconstruction in the interests of peace. As part of this new process, the Government of Colombia has given the Government of Nicaragua favourable terms for the payment of its debt to Colombia and has also promoted the greatest possible flexible support on the part of regional organizations.

The Government of Nicaragua, in the context of its internal legal and constitutional framework, has offered, to the extent possible, a gradual solution to the serious ownership problem and to strengthening the judiciary, as well as to the other goals designed to establish a genuine rule of law to provide security and legal guarantees for its citizens. These actions are in conformity with the content of the draft resolution before us, especially the request for the Secretary-General,

> "in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system and in close cooperation with the Nicaraguan authorities, to continue to provide all necessary assistance to activities for the reconstruction, stabilization and development of that country and to continue to ensure the timely, comprehensive, flexible and effective formulation and coordination of programmes of the United Nations system in Nicaragua, given the importance of these activities for the consolidation of peace". *(A/49/L.25/Rev.1, para. 5)*

Colombia's cooperation with Nicaragua is inspired by the affection we have for that sister country, by our respect for the Charter of the United Nations and by international agreements. It is enshrined in our 1991 constitution, in whose preamble the people of Colombia commit themselves to promoting the integration of the Latin American community and whose Article 9 states that

> "Colombia's foreign policy is aimed at achieving Latin American and Caribbean integration".

Now, in the wake of the bloody struggle it endured for so many years, Nicaragua comes before the international community, the American continent and the world with the resolve to achieve the goal of a true, participatory democracy with full respect for the principles and norms of international law.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua by the United Nations system is, in Argentina's opinion, a case which requires thorough consideration and one from which much can be learned with respect to the entire international system of cooperation for development.

What are the key elements? First, the situation combines two issues that deserve priority attention from the system in terms of reconstruction: the post-conflict era and natural disasters.

Secondly, the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction for development is taking place within a democratic context and with the participation of all sectors of the population. The United Nations contribution must take the form of technical, economic and financial cooperation activities, aimed at the economic consolidation of a democratic regime, which would complement the efforts of the Nicaraguan Government.

Thirdly, from the standpoint of an operational strategy for the activities of the United Nations system, the priority tasks are consistent with the action guidelines included in the concept of sustainable human development.

And, finally, national reconstruction is taking place as part of the process of achieving peace in an entire region that for various reasons has been plagued by natural and man-made disasters. Therefore, any improvement in the situation in Nicaragua will have a positive impact on Central America as a whole, an area that since the 1980s has been given priority attention by the international community.

All these combined elements lead us to the following preliminary conclusion: the current situation in Nicaragua represents a model to which the United Nations system should pay particular attention because of the comparative advantages involved in lending assistance in cases such as this one.

Argentina is in favour of the United Nations paying particular attention in political terms and prioritizing the use of resources with respect to cases such as that of Nicaragua. This will help generate, on the multilateral and bilateral levels, a predictable and reliable flow of technical, economic and financial assistance, which will enable the Government of Nicaragua plan, in the medium term, its economic reconstruction and thus consolidate its democracy.

This brings us to the first specific problem: Nicaragua's external debt. An analysis of that debt in relation to other economic variables leads us to a second conclusion: that this debt is a burden which prevents Nicaragua from establishing a proper framework for productive investment. It is well-known that Nicaragua has the highest per capita debt level in the world and that its per capita gross national product ranks it among the least developed countries. The most recent calculations place this figure at approximately $400 per year.

The gross national product has been decreasing over the last four years by roughly 10 per cent. If we do not take measures similar to those recommended for Africa, such as forgiving the national debt, there will be no solution to the problem of Nicaragua. Argentina understands this and has forgiven the total debt of Nicaragua *vis-à-vis* Argentina - $76 million. This debt forgiveness has an absolute value in terms of its high level and also a relative one with respect to the indebtedness of other countries *vis-à-vis* Argentina. We hope that other creditor countries will follow this same course and that the General Assembly will be in a position to make policy recommendations along these lines.

A third conclusion stemming from an analysis of the other principal indicators is that we must focus on the sectors of health care; education; the elimination of obstacles to ownership of private property, particularly land; State reform; the establishment of the rule of law; and all activities which could contribute to Nicaragua's long-term, sustained and sustainable reactivation.

The United Nations system as a whole must be mobilized at the inter-sectoral level to rehabilitate Nicaragua and help it to develop. Much effort has already been exerted, especially by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), but it is still insufficient. Focusing efforts on Nicaragua will have a twofold positive impact: on the one hand, it will be possible to engage in operational activities within the framework of sustainable human development strategies that encompass all the areas where the United Nations has a comparative advantage; and, on the other, there will be international economic cooperation to strengthen a process of democratic consolidation that will have a positive effect on the entire Central American region.

The last issue concerns the kind of report on this question that we would like to see in the future. We appreciate the information in document A/49/487 because it gives us an idea of what has been done by the system and constitutes an analysis of the situation. Nevertheless, we would have liked to see some policy recommendations for enhancing the degree of commitment of the United Nations system *vis-à-vis* the rehabilitation process for Nicaragua's development in particular and the establishment of true, strong and lasting peace in Central America as a whole.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: As we take up the item entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", we must bear in mind that the international community must continue to follow up carefully situations where, following grievous conflicts, it is necessary to engage in peace building. It is important, therefore, for the international community, by supporting the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Nicaragua, to help put a definitive end to armed conflict and to strengthen the country's stability and development.

Over the past few years, Nicaragua has been faced with some difficult challenges in the threefold process of transition which it has undergone since the conflict. This is a complicated process, and, after peace has been achieved, progress must be made in implementing economic and social structural reforms and in promoting new political and institutional reconstruction efforts in the country.

This process has at times been affected by events that, fortunately, no longer exist. But this is an indication of the fragility of the process. As the Secretary-General points out in his report to the Assembly:

> "... in spite of the achievements of the Nicaraguan transition, the country has not been able to advance in all areas and there is a lag in the socio-economic field in relation to the political and macroeconomic areas". *(A/49/487, para. 13)*

These uncertainties about the future make it necessary for us to continue to support this process in order to assist Nicaragua as it moves towards sustainable development.

The achievement of this objective not only is indispensable to the attainment of peace and prosperity in Nicaragua, but it also affects the entire Central American region. Resolution 48/161, adopted by the Assembly last year, demonstrated that the consolidation of peace in Nicaragua is a key factor of the Central American peace process. In that resolution, the Assembly welcomed with interest the initiative by the Government of Nicaragua concerning the establishment of an active group of friendly countries to play a particularly important role in supporting the reactivation of the economic and social development of Nicaragua, which would facilitate the strengthening of its institutional and democratic structures.

With the help of the Secretary-General, who has from the outset lent his full support to this initiative, a group of countries, including Spain, established a support group for Nicaragua in May 1994.

The Support Group, consisting of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, stemmed from the international community's realization of the need to monitor the dynamics of the country's transition process. By assessing the progress as well as the problems, the group is trying to foster joint efforts to promote the country's reconstruction and development as well as to bring to international forums a comprehensive idea of the process evolving in Nicaragua.

The Support Group works closely with the UNDP Office in Nicaragua. It is trying to assist the political and social efforts of Nicaragua so that, working together, they can decide on the priorities of development and national reconciliation.

In resolution 48/8, adopted by consensus at the last session, the General Assembly requested all Member States, the international funding agencies and regional intraregional and non-governmental organizations to continue providing support to Nicaragua to overcome the aftermath of war and natural disasters and to stimulate the process of reconstruction, social investment, stabilization and development.

Spain - as a nation and as a member of the European Union - has been giving a high priority and every possible form of assistance to Nicaragua at this crucial stage of the country's efforts to consolidate peace and democracy and to foster economic and social progress.

In the framework of bilateral projects, Spain is implementing a large number of programmes agreed upon with the Nicaraguan authorities, in areas such as education and training of human resources, institutional improvement, health care, urban and rural development and preservation of the cultural heritage. Spain is also providing food aid on a regular basis as well as assistance to regional programmes in Central America in which Nicaragua participates.

For all those reasons, Spain urges the Secretary-General and the United Nations system as a whole to continue to support and assist Nicaragua in its efforts at peace building, democratic reconstruction and development. My delegation has therefore joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1 which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Runge (Germany): I wish to speak briefly at this point on behalf of the European Union, since agenda item 23, "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua", is the first item to come up for discussion in the General Assembly on special humanitarian and economic assistance questions.

In view of the constantly rising number of natural disasters and complex emergencies worldwide, the European Union fully supports the integrated approach taken by the United Nations system aimed at immediate relief measures and an effective continuum of activities from humanitarian aid to rehabilitation and long-term development. It is with concern, therefore, that we note that the number of resolutions containing, in one form or another, individual appeals for humanitarian and economic assistance is also rising.

The European Union recognizes the needs that underlie each and every one of these appeals. We are concerned, however, that the considerable number of resolutions submitted individually will not be able to raise further the level of support. We therefore urge Member States to fully support and comply with the efforts undertaken with a view to streamlining the relevant decision-making processes of the Assembly through, *inter alia*, the biennialization and clustering of items.

Mr. Cohen (Israel): Israel was pleased to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1. We are confident that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

We have consistently expressed our readiness to cooperate with Nicaragua in the many areas related to its rehabilitation and reconstruction. We are glad to note that, since the democratically elected Government was established, we have been able to carry out such cooperation. For this reason, we welcomed Nicaragua's invitation to participate as an observer in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua last July.

Israeli technical cooperation with Nicaragua is at a historic peak, and we hope to enhance it further through additional programmes conducted by the Centre for International Cooperation of our Ministry for Foreign Affairs. These programmes are designed to share, through courses in Israel and on-site courses in Nicaragua, Israeli know-how and experience in all areas: agriculture, community development, health, education and development of democratic institutions.

We look forward to further cooperation, and we express the hope that other countries will join in the important mission of promoting development there. It is our hope that such activities will help strengthen stability and democracy in Nicaragua and throughout the region.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Central American Group, I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and El Salvador to state once again that we Central Americans believe that Nicaragua's efforts to consolidate peace, democracy and sustainable development are worthy of support.

Under the leadership of President Chamorro, the Government of Nicaragua has been making progress in its efforts to leave behind its complicated and painful recent history of confrontation, destruction and crisis, which in the last decade affected in one way or another the lives and the hearts of all Central Americans.

In this new decade, the pacification of the region has gone beyond cease-fire and demobilization and has moved into cooperation and integration. Our agenda for peace in Central America, on which we have been working since the Esquipulas agreements, has been complemented by subsequent agreements adopted by the Presidents of Central American countries at regional summit meetings. Those agreements are rich in content dealing with society, economics, education, culture, ecology, security, commerce, development and the modernization of our societies.

This integrationist agenda simply reflects the will of our peoples and is the result of the daily efforts of our Central American Governments to achieve lasting solutions by going straight to the root of the problems that led to the confrontation that weighed us down in the past. In the search for those solutions, we Central Americans have decided to commit ourselves to a broad integrationist effort with an emphasis on supporting tasks that each Government is carrying out nationally and locally. Nicaragua's efforts in that context are deserving of appreciation and should enjoy the necessary support of the international community. We should bear in mind that the task of political, economic and social reconstruction and rehabilitation is considerably more difficult for that country because of the burden its people bear as a result of a past of fratricidal war, a fractured economy, an overwhelming external debt that gives it no leeway for social investment and the highest per capita debt in the world, as well as other structural problems that the Secretary-General points out in his report contained in document A/49/487.

Since 1990 Nicaragua has been meeting the challenges of a complex transition and showing a firm commitment to the path of peace, democracy, freedom, justice and comprehensive progress for its people. In each of those spheres of action there have been clearly identifiable achievements, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, such as the disarming of civilians, reduction of the army, restructuring and reduction of the public sector, broad prioritization of social expenditures and economic investment in the national budget and effective and balanced powers of State.

In short, the Government of Nicaragua's management of this transition process deserves our broadest recognition. The people of Nicaragua has made its sacrifice in the form of the required adjustment and has placed its hopes in democracy and peace. In this context, now is not the time to consider our work completed. The after-effects of the war run particularly deep in that country, and it requires the sustained, predictable and balanced support of the international community to deal with areas that have been neglected while other, passing challenges have been met.

The challenge is a complex one for Nicaragua and, therefore, for Central America. As the Secretary-General points out in his report,

> "the delay in [certain spheres] may impair the overall transition process." *(A/49/487, para. 5)*

In this context, we must decide what are the proper levels of support, bearing in mind the kinds of measures that Nicaragua is taking towards consolidating its achievements, its priorities and the factors essential for its development. If it can achieve a higher degree of political stability, it will be able to deal with the very complex problems that constitute the most serious obstacles on the path to permanent recovery. A more stable situation now prevails in Nicaragua, and this justifies investment in the efforts to reinvigorate the economy, over and above the assistance necessary to overcome the crisis.

Therefore the international community must increase its efforts to consolidate the sustained progress and ensure that it lasts.

With a view to strengthening these achievements, the Central American countries resolutely support the people and Government of Nicaragua, aware as we are that the efforts of the Central American region to solve its own problems have been yielding very positive results during the current decade and that the experience gained in our transition towards peace and sustainable development can contribute to the establishment of a more stable and just future on the continent and, therefore, in the world in this new era of cooperation.

Thus we unreservedly support the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.25/Rev.1, and we hope that it will be adopted unanimously.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): Italy fully endorses the statement that was made by Germany in its capacity as President of the European Union and wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/49/487) on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua.

In recent years the people of Nicaragua have taken great strides forward in reconstructing their country after the civil war that for many years obstructed its normal development and damaged the fabric of its society and economy. However - and this is not unlike the myth of Sisyphus - at the first signs of economic recovery and the rebirth of civic coexistence, these efforts were in danger of being erased by natural disasters and an extended drought.

In its support for development, Italy has always demonstrated special sensitivity to joint action with international organizations that fosters the participation of local populations. This is the direction in which the Government in Managua is moving.

It is well known that over the last few years Italy has contributed to support for the peace process in Central America through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by granting $115 million towards establishing the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE). The Managua Government has enthusiastically endorsed PRODERE's development philosophy by implementing a decentralized development policy. Here I am pleased to quote the words of the Nicaraguan Minister of the Presidency, Mr. Antonio Lacayo:

> "Concerted action and social dialogue at the local level make it possible to identify the main problems and find the solutions to be included in national development planning."

In this sense, and in the framework of PRODERE, the Nicaraguan Government is implementing an important pilot project in Nueva Segovia and in Jinotega, with technical assistance from PRODERE.

One of PRODERE's contributions is of special symbolic importance. I refer to the transformation of the military fortress of Estancia Cora in northern Nicaragua into a centre for professional training that functions today on a self-sustaining basis.

In conclusion, Italy wishes to express its solidarity with the people of Nicaragua in their vigorous pursuit of political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. These goals require not only national efforts but also the support of the international community. Italy continues to offer its unwavering political support to Nicaragua through bilateral and multilateral channels, and I have the honour of informing the Assembly that we are pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

The President *(interpretation from French):* We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1.

The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas and the Netherlands.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/49/L.25/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 49/16).

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158

Report of the International Conference on Population and Development: report of the Conference (A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1)

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to hold the debate on item 158 directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that action on it would be taken in the Second Committee.

I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at noon.

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) *(interpretation from French):* I have the privilege of speaking on behalf of the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and of China on the International Conference on Population and Development, which a fraternal country, Egypt, had the honour and the generosity to host from 5 to 13 September 1994 and which will without any doubt remain one of the outstanding activities undertaken by the United Nations in the crucial sphere of harmonizing the policies of Member States and strengthening international cooperation for development.

Indeed, the importance of population questions and their dynamic relationship with socio-economic development in all our societies was fully grasped by the international community in general and by Governments and others involved at the national level. The record degree of participation in, and the high quality of the work done at, the Cairo Conference attest to a universal awareness of the essential role of population as it relates to the overall problems of development.

The Cairo Conference followed the two Conferences that had previously been held on population, in Bucharest in 1974 and in Mexico City in 1984, and it drew on the experience and maturity gained there in approaching the three linked issues - population, development and the environment - and reached the results whose scope we are now in a position to appreciate.

Indeed, the Programme of Action that resulted from the work of the Cairo Conference was innovative in that it marked a break with traditional approaches, which merely supplied statistics of demographic trends in isolation. Thus, the Programme of Action gives special attention to a broad range of elements that together and simultaneously exercise a definite influence on the dynamic that links population with sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Stress was therefore placed on the family, women, access to education, the protection of the mother and child, the fight against poverty, and respect for human dignity in its manifold needs.

In sum, the Programme of Action placed the human being at the centre of its attention and projections, since the human being is the artisan and beneficiary of development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The consensus reached in Cairo made possible the success of the Conference despite the disturbing pessimism of some, and it has given us grounds for hope.

Notwithstanding their complex and controversial aspects, and despite the exaggerated and sometimes artificially generated attention that was devoted to them, the questions of a highly moral nature did not, fortunately, divert attention from the main thrust of the Conference. Those who had a direct interest in the result of the negotiations met the challenge posed by certain aspects of the document that were sensitive by virtue of their relationship with diverse cultures, religions, traditions and other moral values. In this context, the delegations of the developing countries, as usual, demonstrated a keen sense of responsibility by making a constructive contribution to the debate.

In this spirit, the Group of 77 had the privilege of initiating the introduction to the 15 principles contained in the Cairo document, which will guide the international community's efforts in implementing the Conference's recommendations for the next two decades. This introduction states with the utmost clarity the sovereign right of States to formulate population policies in conformity with their development priorities and with full respect for the ethical, religious and cultural values of their peoples. No one doubts that all multilateral cooperation in this matter must be based on the concern that these fundamental parameters be respected. It is worth stressing that the discussions that will be taking place in the preparatory processes for future international conferences, in particular the World Summit on Social Development and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, will certainly spare us some effort and energy if these guidelines are duly reflected and borne in mind as a given that it would not be wise to debate further. Indeed, the history of human beings shows us that the diversity of social, cultural and civilizational realities, which are such a rich asset of the international community, cannot and should not be reduced to simplistic notions of uniformity, which can never work.

The quantitative objectives of the Programme of Action require the attention and constant mobilization of the international community. I refer in particular to the reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates, which, despite the progress made at the global level, remain high on average in several developing countries and regions by comparison with universally recognized norms. The objective advocated here is to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries by improving the health care and nutrition of mothers and children. It has been acknowledged that this goal can be achieved if national efforts are supported by the international community. Access to basic education for all children and the sustained action that must be taken by the developing countries to reduce illiteracy form part of this approach. It is appropriate for me to express regret that despite the decisive importance this question has for any integrated population policy, education has not been given the attention it deserves among the four main components set forth in chapter XIII, which contains estimates for funding levels to meet the needs of the developing countries for the period 2000 to 2015.

From a conceptual point of view, which one hopes will result in practical and operational action, the Cairo Conference did identify responsibilities for the worsening of poverty and its consequences for the environment. It went beyond the narrow context of population problems, for which the cliché "population explosion" is very often wrongly used. It clearly established that patterns of production and consumption in the rich countries are not in every respect compatible with the needs of sustainable development.

Because of the diversified, intersectoral and multi - disciplinary nature of the recommendations and objectives adopted by the Cairo Conference, broad national participation in an ongoing endeavour covering all aspects of the problems of population and development, with the active and decisive assistance of all those involved, is required if they are to be achieved.

National efforts must naturally be supplemented by joint action at the subregional and regional levels to ensure beneficial and effective interaction. In this context, it is important to strengthen the capacities of the subregional and regional agencies, including the regional economic commissions, to enable them to play their full role, particularly in the area of the exchange of experience, the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, and the carrying out the studies that are necessary to achieve the objectives of the Cairo Conference. Accordingly, institutions of the United Nations system are more than ever called upon to make the qualitative and quantitative contribution expected of them, particularly in terms of expertise and the transfer of science and technology to strengthen research programmes and assist in the development of the national capacities of the developing countries in these areas.

The importance, indeed the urgency, of fully implementing the Cairo Programme of Action requires the rapid mobilization of the human and financial resources indispensable to carrying out the manifold and multiform action to which the international community agreed, to the satisfaction of all.

In this spirit, the countries members of the Group of 77 and China, on whose behalf I am honoured to speak, have demonstrated their unequivocal commitment to this objective by agreeing to the Secretariat's estimates on the funding levels required for the years 2000 to 2015 - levels which place their own contribution at two thirds of the entire sum. This clearly shows the determination of the developing countries fully to shoulder their responsibilities in this regard. Given the imperative need to ensure that the Cairo Programme of Action does not remain mere wishful thinking, and given also the immensity of the task in this framework, our partners, the developed countries, are called upon to make up the additional resources in conformity with commitments undertaken under chapters XIII and XIV of the Programme of Action. Moreover, it has been unanimously acknowledged that the implementation of the various components of the Programme of Action will require new and additional resources to support the efforts to be made by the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, to strengthen their programmes for combating the poverty rife in several areas of the world. We therefore hope that all participants in the political and moral contract concluded in Cairo will strive to implement all its provisions with the good faith and enthusiasm commensurate with what is at stake for mankind.

The importance of follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action is obvious and does not need to be demonstrated. It is in this spirit that chapter XVI of the Programme of Action stresses the central role to be played by the General Assembly, as the most representative political and intergovernmental organ, in the formulation and consideration of policies on questions of follow-up to the Conference. In this context, paragraph 16.25 particularly stresses the need for an in-depth analysis of the capacities of existing mechanisms, particularly the United Nations Population Fund, the Population Commission and the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. In this connection, the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and China are currently considering a draft resolution, to be submitted to the Second Committee on this subject, that fully reflects the pertinent provisions of chapter XVI. Without prejudice to the final result of this exercise, we believe that an additional effort must be made at the system-wide level to achieve better coordination among the agencies involved in follow-up action so as to find an integrated approach to the better distribution of tasks and roles for harmonizing procedures in the submission of reports to the Economic and Social Council.

In order to make things clearer at the 1995 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, which will be considering the roles, responsibilities, mandates and comparative advantages of the intergovernmental organs and agencies involved in population issues, and in the discussions to be held under the review mechanism established by resolution 48/162 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Secretariat should prepare a study on future institutional arrangements.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate the appreciation and thanks of the delegations of the countries members of the Group of 77 and China to Ms. Nafis Sadiq for her efforts to ensure the success of the Cairo Conference. Our thanks go also to Egypt for its hospitality, its generous welcome, and its organizational work to facilitate the deliberations and success of the Conference.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development was a great success. The stakes were high. The spirit of Cairo was apparent throughout our negotiations. We produced an agenda on population and development for the coming 20 years that reflects what we feel is needed for a common future of humanity. We can all be proud of that.

I would like to pay particular tribute to our host, Egypt, and to Ms. Sadik, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and her team. They did their utmost to ensure the eventual success of our work on the Programme of Action.

Mr. Lopes de Rosa (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Programme of Action redefines the global agenda for population activities. We have moved from the earlier emphasis on demography and population control to a focus on sustainable development, including sustainable consumption and production patterns, mutual and individual rights and responsibilities, women's rights and the freedom to choose in particular with regard to child spacing and reproductive health. To this extent, the International Conference was a major conference on sustainable development, closely linked to previous United Nations Conferences, especially the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and such upcoming Conferences as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. These Conferences can and should build on the achievements of Cairo. The European Union endorses fully the Programme of Action of Cairo.

We are highly gratified by the consensus on financial issues that we were able to reach in Cairo. It shows the serious financial commitment in particular of developing countries, which deserves the support of the international community. The European Union again confirms its intention and commitment to make substantial increases in its contribution to population programmes to help raise the one third of overall funds needed from international resources. Some States members of the European Union and the European Commission have already pledged substantial increases, and others will follow. The result of the pledging conference two weeks ago is in this respect also somewhat promising. The United Nations Population Fund expects an increase for 1995 of 15 per cent to a level of $300 million. The remaining two thirds of the needed overall annual resource allocations are to be provided by the public and private sectors of individual countries themselves. The European Union believes that, as stated in the Programme of Action, domestic-resource mobilization efforts of the least developed and other low-income developing countries have to be complemented by a significantly greater share of international resources.

I now turn to the main task of the near future, the institutional follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development in the United Nations and its monitoring. Chapter XVI of the Programme of Action has given us some ideas how it could be organized. Unlike the follow-up to the two previous Conferences on population, this time we have to adjust institutional arrangements to the integrated approach on population and development taken by the Conference. We have to check whether the existing structures are still suitable or whether they need appropriate adjustment. In doing so, we have to bear in mind the broader context. Any adjustment in the United Nations system for the follow-up of the International Conference must also be seen in relation to forthcoming United Nations Conferences, such as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women and the consequences adjustments may have for their respective follow-up processes.

The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are the real monitors of the follow-up process. Since the Council has a coordinating responsibility for all areas covered by the Programme of Action, it seems to us that it would be best placed to act as the principal monitoring mechanism. The assumption of such a responsibility would be a valuable test-case of whether the Economic and Social Council is capable of undertaking such a substantive task. The high-level part of the operational activities segment of the Council is already scheduled to discuss the follow-up next year.

In our view, the present structures for the time being serve our common interest in ensuring adequate institutional arrangements for the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. After Rio, the situation was different. There was no commission with a mandate for sustainable development. On the other hand, the Commission on Population - a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council - has been in existence since 1946. We believe that this Commission should and could play a useful role in the follow-up to Cairo. Its mandate and its functioning should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly, so as to respond to the much broader scope and integrated approach of the Cairo Programme of Action.

The European Union encourages a complementary approach between the Population Division of the Secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in terms of their respective mandates. We hope to see some pragmatic arrangements that would ensure cooperation between the Executive Director of UNFPA and the Population Division in order to ensure overall coordination of the population activities of the United Nations system.

During the past 25 years, UNFPA has become one of the most important players in the field of multilateral population and development assistance. Its impartiality and responsiveness to the specific needs of individual developing countries represent a unique comparative advantage. Together with the Population Division, UNFPA also played a significant role in ensuring the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. The European Union will continue to provide strong support for UNFPA and its activities in the future. With regard to the proposal made by UNFPA to establish a separate executive board, and bearing in mind resolution 48/162, the European Union does not currently see a case for such a board. But we believe that the Fund has to adjust itself to the integrated approach of the Programme of Action.

There is a clear consensus that the various organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations as well as national and regional institutions have to review, strengthen and adjust their plans, programmes and activities in the aftermath of the Conference. Where appropriate, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, including the Commission for Social Development, should do likewise. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and community groups is vitally important in this respect. Without the commitment of the non-governmental part of our societies, the implementation of the Programme of Action will be hampered or even fail.

To assess progress, an enhanced database is crucial. We know that the quality of national reports depends very much on the availability of sound data. To minimize the burden of preparing such national reports, the European Union underlines the proposal in paragraph 16.13 of the Programme of Action to seek an appropriate consolidated reporting system for the follow-up to all United Nations conferences in related fields. Where possible, such national reports should be compatible with national sustainable development plans that countries will be preparing in the context of the implementation of Agenda 21.

The European Union is committed to achieving the goals and objectives contained in the Programme of Action. We trust that all Member States will be in a position to agree on an appropriate institutional adjustment for the United Nations system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Programme of Action. Under chapter XVI of the Programme of Action, the Economic and Social Council should be involved in the preparation of the institutional set-up before the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly takes final action. What we need now is the General Assembly's endorsement of the resolution under which the Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo. And we need to indicate what kind of input and what report we expect from the Secretary-General as a basis for our further discussions at the Economic and Social Council's substantive session in July 1995. The European Union is ready to extend positive cooperation in the Second Committee to achieve consensus on such a resolution.

Mrs. El-Islambouly (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express my delegation's support for the statement made by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I wish also to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the many delegations that have paid tribute, on many occasions since the beginning of the current session of the General Assembly, to Egypt's efforts as the host country of the Conference, both in the general debate and during the consideration of relevant items in the various Committees.

My delegation welcomes the report of the International Conference on Population and Development contained in document A/CONF.171/13. My delegation also pays tribute to the sincere efforts and constructive cooperation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of Dr. Nafis Sadik, the Secretary-General of the Conference during the preparatory period and during the Conference proper, which Egypt was pleased to host in September 1994. The organizational and substantive success the Conference achieved has been a source of satisfaction for the entire international community.

The Conference's successful adoption of a Programme of Action by unprecedented consensus generated a sense of elation which continues to this day. The adoption of the Programme of Action testifies to the success of over one hundred and eighty States in conducting a fruitful dialogue between various cultures and civilizations, which led ultimately to a consensual agreement without any attempt by any one party to impose its views or beliefs on any other. The Programme of Action is an important document of a comprehensive nature and a new method of dealing with population questions from a proper perspective, namely their relatedness to development issues. The Programme constitutes a guide that will be depended upon in formulating population policies and programmes for the next twenty years or so, at the national, regional and international levels. The Programme of Action dealt with matters of extreme importance, such as the relationship between population, sustainable economic growth and sustainable development; questions relating to reproductive health; the empowerment of women, gender equality, male responsibilities; the family; the elderly; family planning; internal displacement and international migration; and the role of non-governmental organizations. In addition, the programme dealt with the quantitative objectives and estimates of the financial commitments needed for its implementation. This is what took place in Cairo: a success that crowned the efforts of the international community in preparing for this important Conference.

What about the future? The success achieved in Cairo must be viewed as the beginning of a serious international movement aimed at the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action. There is a need to maintain the momentum generated by the success of the Conference. There is a need to increase awareness of the Programme of Action at international, regional and national levels. There is also a need to ensure that programmes of action that will be adopted in Copenhagen and Beijing next year and in Istanbul the year after, will reflect what was contained in the Cairo Programme of Action on matters relating to population, social development, the empowerment of women, the preservation of the environment and other relevant questions.

The real success of the International Conference on Population and Development is contingent upon the provision of the financial resources to which States have committed themselves so as to make possible the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action.

This success is also contingent on the follow-up, monitoring and review of the achievements made in the implementation of those recommendations at the national level through increased awareness of the Programme of Action and the formulation of national programmes and policies to implement its recommendations. That could be achieved through maintaining the national committees that participated in the preparatory process of the Conference or through the establishment of new national machinery.

At the regional level, this could be achieved by promoting the role of regional committees, organizations and development banks. At the international level, it could be achieved by establishing effective follow-up machinery. That could be defined during the current session of the General Assembly and the coming session of the Economic and Social Council.

The situation calls for an intergovernmental follow-up machinery to periodically review progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Programme of Action, define the difficulties and impediments that stand in the way, and arrive at the necessary solutions.

Since the general consensus is to work through current existing machinery either at the intergovernmental level or at the Secretariat level, without developing or establishing new bureaucratic structures, the Population Commission might be the appropriate organ to carry out the follow-up role. The Commission is one of the technical committees of the Economic and Social Council. Choosing it to play this role constitutes a logical option and could also constitute a link in an integrated framework for following up and implementing the decisions and results of previous and forthcoming United Nations conferences.

We envisage an integrated framework in which the Commission on Sustainable Development would follow up the decisions of Rio de Janeiro, the Commission on Human Rights would follow up those of Vienna, the Population Commission would follow up those of Cairo, the Commission on Social Development would follow up those of Copenhagen, the Commission on the Status of Women would follow up those of Beijing, and the Commission on Human Settlements would follow up the decisions of Istanbul.

The use of the Population Commission as the machinery to follow up the decisions of Cairo is not only a practical and logical option within the aforementioned integrated whole, but is also consistent with the spirit and letter of General Assembly resolution 48/162 in a manner that would make it possible to follow up the decisions of the Conference through three intergovernmental structures: the Population Commission which presents its follow-up reports to the Economic and Social Council, which in turn would crystallize and analyse those reports and refer them to the third structure, namely the General Assembly.

In order for the Population Commission to perform this role, there is need to reactivate it, modernize its mandate and terms of reference which have not changed since 1946. Thus the Commission would be changed from one of demographic experts to an intergovernmental committee dealing with questions of population in terms of their relationship to development, and not from a purely demographic perspective.

In order for the Population Commission to perform the role of follow-up machinery, it will be necessary also to increase its membership from 27 to 53 so as to achieve the greatest degree of transparency in following up the decisions of the Commission. It will be necessary as well to change the timetable of its sessions so that it may meet annually instead of biennially. This would ensure the continuity of the follow-up process.

In addition to the role of the Population Commission as an intergovernmental follow-up machinery, we also believe the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) could play a very important role in providing the Population Commission with information on all operational activities relating to multilateral population programmes.

Last month, we observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund. That event occasioned a well-deserved tribute to the important pioneering role played by the Fund since its establishment in supporting population programmes and policies of developing countries in the framework of United Nations operational activities for development.

Proceeding from this, we support the recommendation contained in Chapter XVI of the Programme of Action on giving further consideration to the establishment of a separate Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund. We also support assigning to the United Nations Population Fund the primary responsibility, within the United Nations system, for mobilizing the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

On the other hand, we envisage an important role for the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in providing the Population Commission with information on population trends and studies relevant to population questions in terms of their relationship to sustainable development, and in reviewing periodically the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action. Proceeding from this we call for a strengthening of the abilities and resources of this important Division in order for it to be able to carry out its role within the follow-up machinery.

In addition to the aforementioned we refer to the importance of the establishment of an inter-agency committee on questions of population and development that would be subsidiary to the Advisory Committee on Coordination in order to coordinate the activities of the relevant United Nations organs, agencies, programmes and funds both at Headquarters and in the field.

The success of the Conference in adopting the Programme of Action and the success of the current session of the General Assembly and the next session of the Economic and Social Council in creating the optimum machinery for follow-up, will remain deficient unless all Member States commit themselves to mobilizing the financial resources necessary to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action in the manner mentioned in Chapter XIII of the Programme. This success could be strengthened by non-governmental organizations taking an active role in the coming stage as a sequel to the important and active role played by those organizations in preparing for the Conference, during the Conference proper, and in the meetings of the parallel forum of non-governmental organizations.

We are confident that the great interest shown by all parties will ensure that the success achieved in Cairo will be sustained and the momentum generated by that success will be maintained with the aim of achieving the goal of a better life for present and future generations.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): I should like to begin by expressing the Indonesian delegation's sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Group of 77 for his lucid statement, with which my delegation fully associates itself.

My delegation welcomes the outcome of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and applauds the sense of inclusion and cooperation with which the complex, important and often sensitive issues were addressed. We also trust that the Conference's sweeping Programme of Action will constitute a veritable blueprint for shifting the ominous course of population trends onto a more sustainable path. To do that, however, the spirit of cooperation and partnership that permeated the Conference must carry over into its implementation phase. We hope that the Assembly will not only endorse the Cairo Programme of Action but that it will also seek to maintain and build upon the momentum generated by the Conference and its preparatory process to ensure its timely implementation. If that can be accomplished, the prediction of the Conference's Secretary-General, Mrs. Sadik, at the closing meeting, that this Programme of Action has the potential to change the world, could very well prove to be true.

The International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, like the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and unlike the former population conferences at Bucharest and Mexico, tackled the population question within the broad context of development. As a developing country with the fourth largest population in the world, Indonesia is particularly pleased that the growing recognition of the interlinkage between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development was reflected in the principles of the Programme of Action. The linkages between poverty and population policies have also been clearly acknowledged and, if implemented, should serve to raise the quality of life of the poor. Since Indonesia has adhered to the principle of people-centred development and to the importance of human-resource development, we believe that such an approach represents a definitive means for enlarging the options and choices available to the people for improving their well-being.

Human-resource development has proved to be central to the struggle to combat the scourge of poverty, redress unemployment and alleviate a broad range of political and social problems. For we believe it is only through such human-resource development and capacity-building, including the participation of women, that sustained economic growth and sustainable development can be effectively promoted and the alleviation of poverty advanced. Therefore, programmes designed to achieve these objectives, including such measures as increased access to information, education and training, employment opportunities and improved health services should be given top priority.

For our part, we in indonesia, particularly since we have been placing increased emphasis on human - or people-centred - development for some time, have sought to strike an overall balance between individual, family and community rights and the right to development. In this context, Indonesia has for quite some time been implementing the first phase of its population approach, designed to create "small, happy and prosperous families". While the first part of this objective has been achieved, the other two parts have not been adequately addressed. The second phase of the approach, which was launched prior to and in anticipation of the outcome of the Cairo Conference, calls again for small prosperous families, but this time, as agents and beneficiaries of development.

Indonesia is also pleased that the Programme highlights the sovereign right of each country to implement the recommendations of the Programme consistent with its national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people and in conformity with universally recognized human rights. This recognition therefore, would help avoid unnecessary controversy that may arise if acutely sensitive questions were addressed globally.

Another principle adopted in the Programme on which my delegation would like to briefly comment is that of the need to advance gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women. From time immemorial, women have held the central role in the family but have, at the same time, often been economically and socially discriminated against and marginalized. What has now become obvious is that there exists a strong relationship between the advancement of women and the lowering in fertility rates. The more economically advanced women have become, and the more choices and options available to them, the smaller their families tend to become. The fulfilment of women's potential through education and employment beyond traditional roles, as well as the elimination of discrimination and violence and punitive practices against them, have inevitably reduced fertility rates. This is not to negate the unique and indispensable role of women in the family. Indeed, compatibility between the participation of women in the labour force and parental responsibilities should be upheld and greatly facilitated. In this context, we particularly welcome the specific quantitative goals of the Programme of Action in the areas of decreased mortality, increased education, especially for girls, and increased access to family-planning information and services.

A critical element in the implementation of the Programme is that of international cooperation, since population and development concerns are a matter for global partnership. Central to such cooperation should be the promotion of national capacity-building, the increase in transfers of appropriate technology and the provision of adequate financial resources for implementing the activities and achieving the objectives of the Programme.

Since partnership is essentially based on the mutuality of interests and benefits, shared responsibilities and genuine interdependence, it is vitally important that each party fulfil its respective part. While Governments have the primary responsibility for pursuing the objective of national capacity building for population and development and for adapting their development plans accordingly, it is imperative that the international community promote a supportive economic environment by adopting favourable macroeconomic policies for sustained economic growth and development. Chapters XIII and XIV have set out the objectives and actions for cultivating such a partnership. We must therefore seek ways and means to strengthen such partnership so as to ensure that we do not experience a pattern of limited action such as the one that has so far characterized the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The requisite political will, expressed in the form of tangible support, is paramount if we are to move forward in fully implementing the Programme.

Nowhere is partnership for population and development more important than in the area of financial resources. Although national action is of primary importance - and indeed, the bulk of resources are being raised domestically - there is also a growing need to increase substantially the availability of international financial assistance in the field of population and development so as to ensure the success of national efforts. It is encouraging to note that financial cooperation has been steadily increasing over the past two decades and that non-governmental organizations and the private sector, as well as international institutions, have become increasingly involved. Likewise, the emergence of various types of partnership configurations is a positive development. We sincerely hope that this consensus will hold and will be translated into action in the form of actual financial resource flows for population programmes.

Additional resources are needed. Ideally, they could be mobilized from official development assistance by an increased effort on the part of the international community to reach the agreed targets for official development assistance. Only through the provision of adequate resources can population growth levels be lowered from the higher to the lower projected figures of the United Nations. At the same time, recipient countries should ensure that international assistance for population and development activities is used effectively to meet national population and development objectives so as to assist donors in securing further commitments on resources for implementing the Programme of Action. Moreover, my delegation would also like to state that the new phenomenon of increased involvement by non-governmental organizations and the private sector should be further encouraged and that such entities should be invited to participate, in partnership with Governments, in all stages of programme formulation, implementation, financing and monitoring. It is important that their unique potential should not be wasted; it should be further fostered.

In the spirit of international cooperation on population and development issues, many developing countries have already engaged in close collaboration. It is in this light that we see the need for strengthening South-South cooperation so that it can play an effective role in implementing the Programme of Action. For our part, we in Indonesia have extended South-South assistance, especially in the area of family planning, which has been recognized as very successful. In doing this, we have found that two innovative means have been particularly helpful in advancing and strengthening such South-South cooperation. The first is the evolutionary approach, whereby two or more countries initiate projects while leaving the door open for others to join at later stages whenever they see fit. We have also sought to develop trilateral financing arrangements, whereby various configurations of South-South and North-South partnerships can be promoted. In this connection, I am pleased to note that, in anticipation of the outcome of the Conference, together with a number of developing countries and with the support of various agencies and organizations, we were able in Cairo to launch a pilot South-South arrangement named "Partners in population and development: A South-South initiative", which we believe could greatly help facilitate the development of a genuine partnership based on mutuality of interests and benefits and equitably shared responsibility for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

As to follow-up action, given the wide-ranging and comprehensive outcome of the Conference, we see a significant need to strengthen greatly both the Population Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). To this end, the Commission's mandate and composition should be reviewed and strengthened so as to enable it to become an effective intergovernmental body for pursuing the follow-up activities of the Conference and for monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action. The UNFPA should also be strengthened so as to increase its effectiveness as the operational arm of the United Nations in the field of population and development. In the light of resolution 48/162, on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, I believe that there is a need for a separate Executive Board for the UNFPA.

In conclusion, as we chart our journey into the twenty-first century and beyond, we have some powerful levers and blueprints, such as the Cairo Programme of Action, within our grasp to help us set a sustainable course towards a promising future. We must not forfeit that promise.

Mrs. Rehn (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

First and foremost, let me congratulate my dear friend Nafis Sadik and her staff on their dedicated work on the International Conference on Population and Development. Let me also thank Egypt for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality we all enjoyed.

The Conference in Cairo was a success. Its Programme of Action is a milestone to which the Nordic countries give their full support. At the same time, the Programme is a challenge to Governments and to the international community.

Cairo confirmed that population-related issues are an inherent part of the global agenda for sustainable development. The Nordic countries welcome this. The main elements of population and development issues - education, health, empowerment of women, sustained economic growth, the environment, and consumption and production patterns - and their interlinkages are also addressed coherently in the Programme of Action. The new thinking in the Programme, especially on the concept of reproductive health and rights, needs to be put into effect with determination. The individual is rightly in the centre of population and development issues, and should be provided with the necessary enabling environment to realize his or her rights, choices and responsibilities. This is the primary responsibility of Governments.

The Cairo agreement must be carried forward at all levels: local, national, regional and international. The message from Cairo must be followed up not only by Member States, but also by society at large as well as by the United Nations and other international organizations. Cairo was one in a string of summits and conferences; it is to be followed by the World Summit for Social Development, the World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The message must be carried over to these conferences.

The clearest signal from Cairo is seen in the spirit of consensus and the recognition of shared global challenges. Other key messages include the need to bring forward the progress made on gender issues, on reproductive health and rights and on the rights and needs of adolescents and children. As regards children, let me also refer to the important debate we have just had in the Third Committee on the promotion of the rights of the child, something we must always have in mind.

Linkages between population and the sustainable use of natural resources also need further refinement. I would like to mention in particular that the progress made in Cairo will serve as an important base for the Beijing World Conference on Women to build on. Let me stress here that we must not forget the role and responsibilities of men.

The main part of the implementation of the Programme of Action will take place outside the United Nations. I would like to underline the importance of actions at the national level, which are the true test. We expect to see concrete action, operational strategies, genuine grass-roots efforts and public support for changes in official policies related to population and development. The dissemination of the Programme of Action is vital. Capacity-building for national action is of the utmost importance, and must encompass the capabilities of non-governmental organizations, especially various women's organizations as well as health and environmental organizations.

At the international level, it is not only the United Nations and the international financial institutions that have an important role to play. Non-governmental and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as the private sector and the research community, are highly relevant. They all must review their agendas and approaches to respond to the call from Cairo.

The outcome and follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development must be seen in a larger global development context, in which the United Nations system is central. We strongly support the Secretary-General in his view that concerted action towards development is urgently needed. The five pillars in his Agenda for Development - peace, economic growth, environmental protection, social justice, and democracy and human rights - are parts of an indivisible whole. From the present series of conferences there seems to be emerging a new framework of human-centred and socially oriented development. The Secretary-General's recommendations in the Agenda for Development map out the United Nations role in furthering the emerging concept. This is the wider perspective against which the follow-up of the Conference must be discussed.

The General Assembly, as the body responsible for overall policy formulation, has to take decisions on the Conference follow-up in the United Nations system. These include discussion and decision-making on the issues of institutional arrangements, monitoring and reporting, coordination and funding. These issues will require further preparatory work prior to next year's session of the Economic and Social Council. Yet all of them should be tackled with a view to a coherent United Nations follow-up to the global conferences.

The responsibility for overall policy guidance and coordination belongs also to the Economic and Social Council as regards population and development issues. The Nordic countries have actively supported an enhanced role for the Council. The series of summits and conferences points to the need for a strong Council. The follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, including reporting and intergovernmental mechanisms, should also support the Council. There is a need to see how the follow-up could relate to, and strengthen the concept of, the five pillars in the Agenda for Development and enhance the comprehensive approach to development advocated by the Secretary-General. As we see it, this entails a stronger United Nations responding to the challenges resulting from the conferences. We should avoid splitting the follow-up into numerous functional commissions and parallel reporting arrangements.

At the intergovernmental level, the United Nations now has several functional commissions, among them the Population Commission, that for the time being deal separately with narrow segments of economic and social development. What is needed, as the Secretary-General says in his recommendations on an Agenda for Development, is effective and realistic mechanisms to follow up the emerging new approach to development in a coherent manner. In addition, the needs arising from the forthcoming conferences and the discussion on the Agenda for Development should be duly taken into account. Participation of non-governmental organizations should be considered along the guidelines adopted in the International Conference on Population and Development process.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is at present the only organization within the United Nations system with a specific mandate in the field of population and development. However, in order to cover all aspects of the new, broad approach, other funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as the specialized agencies, must be mobilized too. These organizations need to take decisions in their governing bodies on their activities in the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. Division of labour, efficient coordination and cooperation are imperative.

In the future, integrated operational activities for development, or at least their coordinated governance, might be a means for the United Nations to be really effective in development cooperation. Against this background, and in the context of the follow-up to the Conference, there does not seem to be, at the moment, justification for a separate executive board for UNFPA. Improving the present governance of UNFPA must in any case be considered in the context of the effective implementation of the reform of operational activities for development.

The follow-up of the Programme of Action requires strengthened multisectoral analytical capacity. The Programme contains many areas that at present are not covered by the mandate of the Population Division or by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. Cooperation needs to be strengthened within the United Nations, utilizing also outside expertise, as appropriate, and keeping in mind the emerging coherent view on development.

Together with improved institutional arrangements, we need a combined reporting and monitoring system for the follow-up of the various conferences, both at the national level and within the United Nations, covering the full range of sustainable human development. The present monitoring and reporting system on population issues, as it was defined 20 years ago, is outdated. We are now dealing with population issues in the context of sustainable development and as a part of the concepts of sustainable human development and human security.

The next session of the Economic and Social Council, which will deal with these issues, must be properly prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with Member States. Furthermore, with regard to coordination, we have noted with interest the work that is already under way in the Advisory Committee on Coordination and in the task force chaired by Ms. Sadik. This inter-agency coordination should be continued and will have to be adjusted to the requirements of the integrated approach that I have already referred to.

From the point of view of the United Nations, we need to ensure the effectiveness and predictability of the financing for population and development, and for development activities in general. We expect that the working group on the funding of United Nations operational activities for development, mandated by General Assembly resolution 48/162, will provide solutions for the future. It is most important to agree on a long-term, stable funding mechanism if we really want the United Nations to respond to the growing demand for grant funding.

The follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development requires true commitment. Even the best possible United Nations mechanisms cannot work wonders without the commitment of our Governments and all concerned partners.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development is a conference of great historical significance following the Conference on Environment and Development. The close linkage of the question of population with environment and development at the Conference has reflected a deeper understanding by the international community on the question of world population. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development adopted by consensus at the Conference set the goal of world population growth in the next 20 years and the new strategy for its attainment, which will have an important impact on the orientation of activities and international cooperation in the field of world population and development.

Population is a major question facing mankind today. How it is addressed bears on the well-being of nearly 5.7 billion people in the world as well as the future survival of all mankind. Therefore, turning the Programme of Action from something on paper into reality is a grave challenge which calls for untiring efforts and political sincerity from all parties.

The Chinese delegation wishes to make the following observations on the implementation of the Programme:

First, the national conditions of each country must be fully respected in implementing the Programme.

The world we live in is diversified where countries differ in population, culture, history, tradition, level of economic development and religious background. It is, therefore, impossible to address the question of population of each country with a unified standard or model; nor can there be such a standard or model. The Programme must be carried out in the light of the population and national conditions of each country, and national population policy and objective should be formulated by each country independently according to the relevant provisions of the Programme.

Secondly, the settlement of the question of population must always be closely integrated with the promotion of all-round social and economic development.

The fundamental objective of addressing the question of population is to improve people's living standards and their quality of life. To achieve this objective, however, it is imperative to promote sustained economic development and gradually meet people's basic social needs. For the developing countries, the primary task is to eliminate poverty, improve education, health care and living conditions, enhance women's status and strengthen environmental protection.

Thirdly, the implementation of the Programme calls for not only the efforts of the Governments of all countries but also effective international cooperation.

The international community - the developed countries in particular - should create a favourable environment for the developing countries in their efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the question of population and development, and should especially fulfil their commitment made at the Conference by providing at least one third of the resources necessary for the implementation of the Programme and make sure that they are new and additional resources rather than those mobilized through the rearrangement of priority projects.

Moreover, no country should attach any conditions to its assistance in the field of population and development, for this is not only against the spirit of the Charter but also runs counter to the principle of equality and mutual benefit governing international cooperation. The United Nations donor agencies for development must adhere to the principles of universality and neutrality of their assistance without being disrupted, let alone manipulated by outside political pressure.

Fourthly, the implementation of the Programme requires effective follow-up actions.

It is necessary to conduct in-depth discussions about follow-up actions at the current session of the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council. The relevant agencies of the United Nations system should give top priority to the implementation of the Programme, and the United Nations agencies for operational activities, especially the United Nations Population Fund, should mobilize sufficient resources for its implementation. Moreover, other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations should also make their contributions to this end. The Population Commission should examine on a regular basis the implementation of the Programme, while countries provide on a voluntary basis information related to their implementation of the Programme. But the intervals for providing such information should not be too short so as to avoid any manpower or financial burden on the developing countries.

China has over one fifth of the world's population. As an active and responsible member of the international community, China attaches great importance to the materialization of the achievements made at the Cairo Conference. Out of a strong sense of responsibility for the present and future interests of the Chinese nation and for the purpose of world stability and prosperity, the Chinese Government will firmly implement its two basic State policies of family planning and environmental protection, while further deepening its reform and opening-up and achieving sustained and steady economic growth, with a view to satisfying the increasing material and cultural needs of the people, improving their quality of life and promoting all-round social progress. China's steady progress in coordinated development in respect of population and economic and environmental protection is undoubtedly a concrete and important contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): I am speaking today on behalf of the developing countries of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) - the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Antigua and Barbuda - and Suriname.

The CARICOM countries and Suriname would first like to express heartfelt condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and the United States on the loss of life and destruction of property caused by the recent tropical storm. The Caribbean is prone to natural disasters, especially hurricanes and tropical storms. Today we appeal to the international community to come to the assistance of those island countries now in dire need.

Given the role played by our 13 Caribbean States, most recently in Cairo, we deem it necessary to pronounce ourselves on agenda item 158, "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development". This subject is of extreme importance to the entire international community.

We face a challenge, one that Member States agreed to confront by convening the International Conference on Population and Development. The challenge is to bequeath to the next generation a planet which will be able to sustain human life for ever. To do that, we must find a balance between current development needs that ensure an improvement in the living standards of present generations and the projected needs of future generations. It requires us to link population, resources, the environment and development in decision-making and planning. This objective requires of us a new model of development.

To prevent our planet from becoming overburdened and to ensure sustainable development, more than 15,000 participants and delegates from 179 States, the non-independent countries and a myriad of non-governmental organizations converged on Cairo, Egypt, this past September. In 1974 and 1984 two other international population conferences were held. More than three years in preparation, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development drew on its predecessor conferences and other recent United Nations achievements, including the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 Earth Summit, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and the International Year of the Family. The International Conference on Population and Development sought to articulate, and succeeded in demonstrating, the interconnectedness of the most challenging issues confronting humanity today. Poverty, inequality, consumption patterns, the status of women and threats to the environment were all addressed.

As developing countries, the member States of CARICOM and Suriname recognize that, should there be rapid population growth and unsustainable development, we would suffer a collision of cataclysmic proportions. As low-lying island and coastal States, we face dangers created by others that imperil our very existence. Therefore, CARICOM and Suriname were intent on making a significant contribution to the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

Prior to the Conference, each of our nations, including the non-independent countries of the Caribbean, produced a national report on population and development. The United Nations Population Fund provided both technical and financial assistance in the preparation of several of those reports. For that we are most thankful. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the CARICOM secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana, also provided technical assistance. Seven subregional and regional preparatory meetings were held within the two-year period preceding the International Conference on Population and Development, allowing Governments to agree on the Latin America and Caribbean Plan of Action and our subregion to put forward the Port of Spain Declaration on Population and Development.

During the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly our 13 countries voiced a desire for a programme of action that would be forward-looking, operational and pragmatic. We maintained that its recommendations should take into account regional diversity and country-specific conditions, such as those of our subregion. I am pleased to report that we are satisfied with the outcome. More than 16 chapters and 100 pages in length, the Programme of Action is the result of long and often difficult debate.

Several chapters of the Programme of Action, especially those on sexual and reproductive health and family planning, reaffirm the sovereignty of the individual over his or her own body; the State is not included where it is not necessary. The Programme of Action states that there is a

> "basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so". (*Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, A/CONF.171/13, annex, para. 7.3*)

Despite the lengthy debate and the necessary compromise during the preparatory process in Cairo, that statement was not eliminated. It has remained intact because it captures the essence of global aspirations in population policy-making.

The CARICOM countries and Suriname have learned that having the information and the means to fill the unmet need for family-planning services requires more than the provision of contraceptives. Our countries believe that the key to achieving the sustainable population-growth goals recommended in the Programme of Action rests with the participation of women in every aspect of development. That, in turn, begins with the education of the female child.

Government is therefore a key actor, but so, too, is the family. Our families are both traditional and innovative. Our societies find creative ways to provide support for single parents, particularly in female-headed households. We need to do even more to shield the children of these households from imported stereotypes which may convey to them a sense of lesser worth, thereby harming the innocents' self-esteem. The Programme of Action addresses this need.

Another significant challenge faced by our 13 low-lying coastal and small island developing States is the problem of out-migration. The emigration of the youngest, the brightest and, frequently, the ablest minds has resulted in a "brain drain". The high rate of emigration from our region has greatly affected the size and age structure of our populations. Many of our countries are faced with large populations of two of the most vulnerable age groups: children and senior citizens. This unusual distribution requires our Governments to pay particular attention to the provision of services to these two groups. Additionally, the prospect of having to support an increasingly older citizenry without the attendant contributions of a large pool of young people of working age places a great strain on the social-security schemes of the affected countries of the subregion. The Programme of Action addresses this anomaly.

We would have preferred to see the Programme of Action pay greater attention to the environment. However, having come away, in May, from Barbados, where the sustainable development of small island States was fully addressed, our countries were persuaded to allow the Cairo document to go forward. Nevertheless, we continue to insist that the industrialized countries must cease and desist from harmful production, wasteful consumption and deadly disposal patterns that threaten our small countries with destruction. Twenty per cent of the Earth's population - the people living in developed countries - cannot continue to consume 80 per cent of the Earth's resources *ad infinitum*. Global warming and rising sea levels threaten our very existence. A new model of development is thus our ultimate objective, and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development is one step in that direction.

We acknowledge that, as a consequence of poverty and our recent colonial past, several of our small countries have insufficient trained personnel to handle the task of implementing population programmes. In the light of this fact, CARICOM and Suriname are pleased to note the proposal by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Mrs. Sadik proposes to establish an expert group, with participants from the World Health Organization, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, to move the concept of reproductive health from the discussion stage to the implementation stage with viable and sustainable programmes. We hope that this proposal will include the dispatch of additional advisers and resources to the Caribbean region from the UNFPA Country Support Team stationed in Santiago, Chile. CARICOM and Suriname are prepared to do all that is necessary to attain the population goals set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. We ask the international donor community to live up to its part of the bargain.

Our 13 small countries have a common history, with a modern history beginning in 1492, when two worlds collided. The *raison d'être* of the then dominant civilization was the accumulation of wealth. Capital accumulation led, in turn, to the industrial revolution. The technological marvels and tools that post-industrial civilization has invented lead us to think that humans can overcome every challenge through the application of intellect. This faith in humanity is not lost in addressing the need to create a new paradigm of development to eliminate the danger to our global village that the current model would surely cause. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development pushes the intellectual frontier forward, and so we support it fully.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): My delegation considers the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development to be a truly significant achievement. Following the comprehensive approach taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro the year before last, the Cairo Programme of Action recognizes the close interrelationship of population, the empowerment of women, reproductive health and rights and sustainable development. It places the population issue in a broader context and gives it the priority status it merits. In the long term, the Programme of Action has the potential to substantially improve the quality of life for all humankind if we commit ourselves to its full implementation.

Therefore, important as the successful adoption of the Programme of Action is, my delegation would like to stress that further efforts by all parties concerned to effect its full implementation on a step-by-step basis are more important still. Every player at the international, regional, national and grass-roots level should be mobilized. Governments must live up to their commitments and implement the Programme of Action in the form of policy and legislation.

For its part, Japan will continue to contribute to the international cooperation efforts carried out under the Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS. Japan pledges to extend its cooperation to developing countries in this area - the total involved is approximately $3 billion - as part of its official development assistance programme for the seven-year period from the fiscal year 1994 to the fiscal year 2000.

Non-governmental organizations can help by providing support and services at the grass-roots level. And, of course, the people themselves, as beneficiaries of the Programme of Action, should be made aware of it and should endeavour to maintain the momentum that the International Conference on Population and Development has generated.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies have a wide range of roles to play in following up the Cairo Conference. The General Assembly, at this session, should adopt a resolution indicating both the general direction and the concrete steps that should be taken to study the mechanism for following up the Conference. Basically, my delegation does not favour the establishment of a new intergovernmental body, like the Committee on Sustainable Development, for this purpose as this would entail duplication of functions and increased expense. Rather, use should be made of the existing mechanism.

At the same time, the follow-up mechanism must be so constructed that it can address the population issue in conjunction with other relevant issues, such as sustainable development, reproductive health and rights, and the empowerment of women. We therefore need to consider strengthening the functions, as well as undertaking appropriate reorganization and coordination, of the relevant organs. I should add that this matter will require thorough and careful consideration by Member States.

Having laid out the basic elements of the follow-up mechanism, I should now like to touch upon some specifics. My delegation is of the view that the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Division in the United Nations Secretariat should strengthen their cooperative relationship and play the central role, as in the case of the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development, while maintaining coordination with other relevant organs.

More specifically, in the light of its comprehensive coverage of population and other relevant issues, the Population Division should assume responsibility for overall coordination, while UNFPA should assume responsibility for the implementation of operational programmes. If these two bodies are to be entrusted with such tasks, however, their functions and capabilities need to be considerably reinforced.

Accordingly, my delegation would like to propose that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the roles of UNFPA and the Population Division, as well as on the reorganization measures and the resources that are needed. Since this is a complex issue, the report should be prepared on the basis of relevant expertise and should present multiple options. It should be submitted as soon as possible in 1995 so that it can be examined by Member States at the next session of the Population Commission, which is to be held in February, and at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council.

With regard to the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action at the intergovernmental level, my delegation considers a substantially reinforced Population Commission to be the appropriate forum at the expert level. The Population Commission could be renamed the "Commission on Population and Development", and monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action could be added to its mandate. Concerning its meeting schedule, the present biennial four-day meeting is far from sufficient to enable it to take up the 16 chapters of the Programme of Action. My delegation proposes a substantial increase in the number of meetings of the new Commission. For example, it could meet annually for one week. At each meeting, a certain subject which covers several chapters of the Programme of Action should be addressed, such as population and sustainable development, population and health care, and population and human rights. While such an increase in the frequency of meetings may well result in increased expense, sufficient time must be devoted to the Programme of Action in light of its importance. In order to minimize additional expense, the current practice of providing air fare to representatives of Member States should be re-examined.

With regard to the size of the new Commission, from the standpoint of efficiency and in order to avoid duplicating the discussions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, it is appropriate to maintain the present membership of 27 States. Experts from Member States who are knowledgeable about the specific subjects to be discussed should participate in the meetings. And representatives from other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the subjects taken up at each meeting, for example, the Statistical Commission, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission on Sustainable Development, should be permitted to participate as observers.

The results of the monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the Commission on "Population and Development" Commission should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which should address this item every year. The focus should be directed particularly towards impediments that may exist to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

In order to maintain the present political momentum concerning the Programme of Action, the General Assembly and the Second Committee, as appropriate, should take up this issue as a separate item every year. In particular, in 1999, which is the halfway point between this year's International Conference on Population and Development and the following one in the year 2004, the General Assembly should undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. We would like to request that the Secretary-General report on the mechanism for such a review in due course.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to touch briefly upon the question of a separate executive board for UNFPA. It is our view that it is premature to create such a separate executive board at this stage. While the necessity of reinforcing the functions of the UNFPA is recognized in view of the implementation of the Programme of Action, the concrete advantages of having such a separate executive board must justify the consequent increase in expense. My delegation is not convinced that there is a genuine need to establish a separate executive board for the UNFPA. In order to strengthen the function of the UNFPA, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board should allocate more time to the operational activities of the UNFPA.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations

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General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

59th Meeting
Thursday, 17 November 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy .... (Côte d'Ivoire)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Programme of work

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to make two announcements.

The first relates to sub-item (j) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit". As members know, the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session will appoint four members to the Joint Inspection Unit to fill the vacancies arising from the expiration of the terms of office on 31 December 1995 of Mr. Tunsala Kabongo of Zaire, Mr. Andrzej Abraszewski of Poland, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes of Greece and Mr. Richard Hennes of the United States of America.

The Secretariat has informed the President that several African States — namely, Burkina Faso, Senegal, the Sudan and Togo — intend to propose candidates. There would therefore be at least four candidates for one seat.

The Eastern European States have endorsed Poland to propose a candidate for one seat.

The Western European and other States have endorsed Greece and Germany to propose candidates. The United States also intends to propose a candidate. There are, therefore, three candidates for two seats.

By letter dated 19 October 1994, the President requested the assistance of the Chairmen of the Group of African States and the Group of Western European and Other States in securing agreed candidatures. Unfortunately, as of today the situation remains unchanged.

It is, therefore, the intention of the President to convene a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on Tuesday, 22 November, in the afternoon, so that the Assembly may select, by secret ballot, one country from Africa and two countries from Western European and other States which will be asked to propose candidates for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Should an agreement be reached before the vote, the President shall inform the Assembly accordingly.

My second announcement relates to agenda item 37, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which will be discussed Wednesday, 23 November.

Members will recall that at the 85th plenary meeting of its forty-eighth session, on 20 December 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/162 on "Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum. When the result of a recorded and/or roll-call vote is followed by an asterisk, see annex to the record.

In accordance with the provisions contained in annex II of resolution 48/162, I have requested Mr. Ernst Sucharipa, of Austria, to be the coordinator for the informal consultations on item 37 and all its sub-items. In this connection, the time and venue for the informal consultations will be announced in the *Journal* in due course.

Agenda item 158 *(continued)*

Report of the International Conference on Population and Development: report of the Conference (A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1)

Mr. Karsgaard (Canada): Canada welcomes the successful conclusion of the International Conference on Population and Development and the adoption of its wide-ranging Programme of Action. The consensus reached by more than 180 delegations, representing diverse regions, religions, cultures and political systems throughout the world, is even more remarkable since it addresses sensitive and sometimes controversial subjects that are at the very heart of human relationships.

We would especially like to thank the Government and the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt for their hospitality and important contribution as hosts for the conference, and the Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development for her untiring efforts on behalf of all those involved in population activities.

One of the most important achievements of the Conference is the acceptance of a new approach to population issues. This approach recognizes that social and economic development — rather than adherence to strict demographic targets — is central to achieving a balance between the number of people on our Earth and their demands on the world's ecosystems. Fundamental to this approach is the recognition that the empowerment of women, through education, income generation and improved health services, is the key to the development process.

Countries have committed themselves to reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, ensuring equal education opportunities for girls, paying more attention to the reproductive health needs of adolescents and improving the access and availability of health care, including reproductive health care services. The Cairo Conference placed a new emphasis on reproductive health, sexual health and reproductive rights, particularly for women, providing women with greater choice in the regulation of their own fertility.

Unprecedented consensus was reached on international migration, which was treated in a comprehensive and balanced way and stressed cooperation between receiving and originating countries. The Programme of Action makes a strong statement in support of family reunification and directly links the long-term manageability of international migration with ensuring that the option of remaining in one's country is a viable one. We note the call for an international conference on migration and development which was made during the Cairo Conference. We believe that such a conference could serve to advance the progress made on migration issues during the International Conference on Population and Development. However, we are not interested in a conference for the sake of a conference. We would support such an initiative if we were convinced it would build on and strengthen the consensus on migration we achieved in Cairo. A necessary precondition of that, in Canada's view, would be broad agreement, in advance of convening such a conference, on its objectives and process. We are, of course, willing to work with other countries to prepare the necessary ground for an eventual conference.

In addition, we note that a proposal for a similar conference on migration issues has been discussed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/113. We strongly urge consolidation of these overlapping initiatives. In our view, the international community should be considering one proposal only for an international conference on migration. We believe the appropriate framework for doing so is our consideration of the proposal emanating from the International Conference on Population and Development.

(spoke in French)

The process leading up to the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Conference itself, provided a model for the involvement of non-governmental groups and experts in the development of international approaches to global challenges. The increasing importance of non-governmental partnerships in the development and delivery of population programmes is entrenched in the Programme of Action.

The Programme of Action forms an international blueprint for action on a wide range of related issues including population growth rates, reproductive health, international migration and the environment. The scope of the document, the degree of consensus reached and the urgency of the challenges addressed demand that we transform the recommendations from the Cairo Conference into action and results.

During the preparatory process for the International Conference on Population and Development, Canada placed particular importance on the follow-up aspects of the Programme of Action. We were pleased to be able to chair a working group on follow-up during the third preparatory conference, held in April this year.

The final chapter of the Programme of Action, "Follow-up to the Conference", offers detailed and prescriptive recommendations for national, subregional and regional activities and activities at the international level.

(spoke in English)

The Programme of Action states that the Economic and Social Council should assist the General Assembly in "promoting an integrated approach" to population and development issues

> "and in providing system-wide co-ordination and guidance in the monitoring of the implementation of the ... Programme of Action." *(A/CONF.171/13, para. 16.23)*

The document further states that this approach should begin with a review of

> "the roles, responsibilities, mandates and comparative advantages of both the relevant intergovernmental bodies and the organs of the United Nations system addressing population and development". *(A/CONF.171/13, para.16.25)*

There are at least 23 units, bodies and organizations within the United Nations system involved in the wide range of population activities addressed in the Programme of Action. This illustrates the degree to which population issues are recognized within the United Nations system as being interconnected. But it also illustrates the true breadth of the coordination challenge that faces us. It is important to ensure that the recommendations on institutional follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development are coordinated with activities envisaged by the Agenda for Development. The Economic and Social Council high-level segment should put forth clear guidance on effective and realistic mechanisms to implement goals established at this and at other conferences, as mentioned in paragraph 34 of the report of the Secretary-General on an Agenda for Development (A/49/665). In this regard, the preliminary results of the development of a common framework should be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council in its high-level segment in 1995.

While all United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and related United Nations organizations should review their own programmes and strategies in the context of the Programme of Action, we should not contemplate major shifts in responsibilities before the review of mandates and comparative advantages envisaged and strongly endorsed in the Programme of Action itself actually takes place. Furthermore, the review of the mandate of the Population Commission as an intergovernmental body should include a broader policy approach, reflecting the scope of the Programme of Action.

After considerable discussion the international community agreed on the need for increased resources to reach the goals agreed on in the Programme of Action. It is Canada's view that the need for efficient and effective use of resources is as important as the need for additional resources. Indeed the latter is often an end product of the former.

Canada recognizes the important contribution of the United Nations Population Fund in the field of population and development, as well as the steadily increasing level of voluntary funded assistance it extends to developing countries.

In conclusion, we are pleased that the UNFPA has assumed the major advocacy role on population issues. This is reflected in the success of the Cairo Conference and will be realized in the strong will of member States to turn words into action.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: May I first of all express our sincere gratitude to the President and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, especially Mrs. Nafis Sadik, whose energetic efforts contributed greatly to the success of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The Cairo Conference marked a breakthrough in harmonizing a general approach by the international community to many important aspects of universal development and the institution of the family; the human rights to life and reproduction; the responsibility of parents and society for the education and development of future generations; the regulation of the dynamics and distribution of population; migration; and general rights and opportunities for women in the process of development.

We wish to draw attention to certain questions relating to the implementation of the decisions taken at the Cairo Conference.

First, what is now of critical importance is the generally universal approach and interaction *vis-à-vis* problems of population based on recognition of the variety of problems and the specific interests and tasks confronting various countries and regions. That is the thrust of the Cairo recommendations, especially concerning the provision of technical assistance to economies in transition. Russia considers that this provision has to be put into effect. It is in full conformity with the letter and spirit of Cairo and must be adequately reflected in the activities of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), regional economic commissions, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent international organizations, in conformity with their mandates and possibilities.

Secondly, the decisions of Cairo provide a new approach to the problems of population, going beyond simply regulating demographic situations and birth rates. They encompass at the same time protecting the reproductive health of mothers, ensuring medical services, developing education, reducing the impact of environmental degradation, ensuring gender equality, and so on. Clearly, the necessary changes will have to be made in national policies and international activities.

Thirdly, the trend towards developing a new cooperative partnership at all levels, national, regional and international, presupposes a more active role for non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups, the private sector, academic circles, and local grass-roots organizations. Our ability to develop these activities will depend to a large extent on the implementation of the Cairo Programme.

There will have to be careful monitoring of changes in the global demographic situation in the context of the social and economic development of States in order that technical adjustments can be made, if necessary, in a timely fashion — as is stressed in the Cairo Programme of Action. Of course, these changes must not encroach on the Cairo cardinal principles and should fully take into account the sovereign rights of States to shape and conduct their own internal population policy.

In our view, the United Nations system's implementation of the decisions taken at the Cairo Conference will require effective coordinating and monitoring machinery to harmonize inter-agency activities, on the one hand, and, on the other, to contribute to developing cooperation with organizations outside the system. At this session of the General Assembly we should agree to assign at least some of those functions to the Population Commission of the Economic and Social Council. It goes without saying that the Commission's mandate and membership must be expanded and that changes must be made in the parameters of its working relationship with the United Nations Population Fund. With regard to that Fund's future activities, we feel that it should remain the centre of United Nations operational activities in the population field and the fulcrum for concrete regional and country projects and for analysing and developing recommendations for national strategies in the field of population.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset I should like to thank the Secretary-General and the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development for their devotion and tireless efforts before and during the Conference. I should also like to refer to the pivotal role of the President of the Conference and the Chairman of the Main Committee in ensuring the success of the Conference.

The Cairo Conference, which was held at a crucial juncture in the history of international cooperation for sustainable development, provided us with an opportunity to examine the question of population from different angles. On the one hand, influenced by the outcome of the world Summit on Environment and Development, the Conference was faced with the challenge of addressing the population question in its entirety, taking into account the close link between population, development and the environment. On the other hand, attempts had to be made to reconcile divergent views on various subjects stemming from existing religious, ethical and cultural diversities.

Fortunately, the Conference was able to respond superbly to these challenges. It set an example. We all learned that, if the existing diversities are duly recognized, many differences and misunderstandings can be solved. In other words, no country or specific group of countries should try to impose a particular set of values on the rest of the world. Furthermore, in the implementation of the Programme of Action religious values should be taken into account. Here I should thank all those delegations that played a constructive role in finding a common ground for consensus during the negotiations.

The Cairo Conference should not be perceived as an end. It was a starting point for sincere international cooperation in population activities. We have a long road ahead. We have committed ourselves to full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, an objective that cannot be attained singlehandedly.

Overshadowed as it was by other controversial issues, the question of financing the Programme of Action received less attention. The 16-chapter Programme of Action sets out a series of recommendations on population and development, including sustained economic growth, protection of the integrity of the family, combating HIV and AIDS, protecting the health of adolescents, gender equity, urbanization, reproductive health, poverty alleviation, family-planning services and so on. Although the developing countries are working hard to respond to these urgent needs, the financial requirements of the Programme of Action goes well beyond their national capabilities. To be more specific, given the extreme resource constraints in developing countries caused by the prevailing unfavourable international economic environment, it is difficult for those countries to mobilize adequate national resources. Accordingly, without the provision of substantial external resources on an assured basis the chances for full and expeditious implementation of the Programme of Action are slim. Specific financial commitments commensurate with the scope and scale of the foreseen activities should be made to guarantee the attainment of the objectives set forth by the Conference.

The Programme of Action calls for the mobilization of adequate resources from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources. None the less, provision of financial resources for population programmes should by no means lead to a decline in contributions to the other United Nations development activities.

With regard to follow-up to the Conference, I should like to underline the importance of strengthening the Population Commission of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and of coordination between all relevant organizations of the United Nations system. Moreover, we have carefully studied the proposal on establishing a new executive board for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. However, it seems that there is a need for a detailed report on the advantages, as well as the financial costs, of setting up a separate Executive Board for the UNFPA.

Given the link between the International Conference on Population and Development and the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, the output of the Cairo Conference should be used as an input for these international conferences. At the same time, more attention should be given to the constructive role of the family and religious values in social development.

I should now like to touch briefly upon the population policies and programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the past decade, the country faced unprecedented population growth, reaching as high as 3.6 per cent in 1987. The following three essential factors contributed to the hike in population growth: first, the lack of a clear and coordinated family-planning programme; secondly, there was a significant decline in the infant mortality rate, from 115 deaths per 1,000 births in 1976 to 25 per 1,000 births in 1994; and, thirdly, an influx of refugees from neighbouring countries.

Against this background, given the concern over the unmanageable population growth, population policy was one of the first priorities on the agenda of the first five-year economic and social plan, which began in 1989. The pillars of our population policy have been as follows: re-evaluation of laws and regulations that conflict with the country's family-planning policy; improving the literacy rate, particularly through provision of schooling for women; lowering the infant mortality rate by expanding primary health-care services; facilitating the full participation of women in economic, social and political activities; improving the quality and scope of family-planning services through, *inter alia*, education, training and the use of reliable contraceptive methods; supplying all types of contraceptives free of charge and making them accessible to all people across the country; encouraging the participation of people, especially women, in family-planning education; enhancing the coordination of various population programmes through the establishment of the Birth Control Council, with the participation of all relevant organizations; using applied research to promote the quality of family-planning programmes; and the expansion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, especially with United Nations agencies and programmes.

The achievements of the programme have been very encouraging. In 1993 the population-growth rate dropped to 2.3 per cent. Statistics suggests that, as the programme has continued, the population-growth rate has dropped further, to 1.8 per cent in 1994. It is worth stating that this decline in population growth has been achieved in spite of encouraging young people to marry.

I cannot fail to mention the crucial role of women in the accomplishment of our family-planning programme. Without their active participation in decision-making and implementation, most of our achievements would have been beyond our reach.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Assembly of the firm commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to doing its share in guaranteeing the success of the decisions of the Conference.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): Samoa joins previous speakers in welcoming the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development. The Programme of Action marks the resolve and commitment of us all to seeking solutions, in the context of sustainable development, to the current urgent population challenges facing our global community. It is a Programme that, aside from attempting to bring about an improved quality of life for all, will no doubt have a broad-ranging impact on population-related issues beyond the development and family-planning strategies and programmes of the past.

Allow me therefore warmly to congratulate all those who worked hard, against and under circumstances that at times were very difficult, to make this Programme a reality. We owe special gratitude to the Government and the people of Egypt for hosting and staging so truly remarkable and historic an event, as well as to Mrs. Nafis Sadik and her able staff for their quality work and wise guidance throughout.

Perhaps the greatest contribution and major achievement of Cairo was the recognition of the notion that enhancing the educational, political and economic opportunities of women is the surest approach to stabilizing population growth. Samoa fully supports the principle enunciated by the Conference that advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women is a cornerstone of population- and development-related programmes. We should remind ourselves that women are the bearers of our children and are surely in the best position — better than most economists, planners and demographers — to slow birth rates if given greater access to higher education, economic opportunities, political freedom and better health care. At the same time, there is a need for men perhaps to re-educate themselves and to take seriously their social and family responsibilities, including their sexual and reproductive behaviour, for the empowerment of women cannot come about without the joint and equal participation of men and women in society.

In this regard, Samoa would like to see appropriate attention and priority given by the international community and by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other agencies to enhancing the role of women in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

While we welcome the new concepts of empowerment of women and reproductive rights, they would still need to be accommodated, in our own case, within the context of the Pacific region, and indeed of our own national customs and practices. It is essential therefore that wide dissemination of relevant information on the Programme of Action of the Conference be carried out effectively. This information should be clear and easily understood.

Possibly the most effective place where the Programme of Action can be put to the test would be in the smaller countries of our international community. For the smaller countries, perhaps unlike the larger ones with greater populations, the issue of population is viewed and measured not so much in terms of absolute numbers, but primarily on its growth-rate impact on very limited land and natural resources as well as on available infrastructure and social services. For, when viewed in proportion to land size and available resources, small island countries such as my own, surrounded by oceans of socio-economic constraints and rising tides of population, are in fact among the most vulnerable and the least equipped to absorb additional population.

In the light of the accomplishments of Cairo, a number of international, regional and national measures and responsibilities will have to be taken to implement, effectively and speedily we hope, the Programme of Action.

Samoa and its Pacific island neighbours would have to look to reviewing what is known as the Port Vila Action Programme, which was used as the basis for the Pacific region's contribution to the Cairo Conference. The Cairo strategies will be looked at also in the context of our national and regional approaches to sustainable development in line with the outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, recently held in Barbados.

We welcome the specific tasks and goals set by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, including the target of making family planning universal by the year 2015 as part of a broader approach to reproductive health and rights. Certainly at the national level, there would be a need to finalize our population strategy and to review existing national population programmes and priorities in accordance with the Programme of Action as we look at the various components of family planning in a much broader context.

However, in order to enhance the implementation of the Cairo Conference outcomes and to sustain their momentum, we will need adequate financial resources from the donor community and new strategy approaches and guidelines from the United Nations system, particularly from UNFPA as the lead agency on population. Overseas funding will be required to assist and to supplement national Government resources and activities with special attention to the requirements of the least-developed countries as called for in the Programme.

As we have stated in the past and as we stated in Cairo, my delegation would urge that donor funding for population activities should be new and additional, and not at the expense of funding for other development activities. For small island developing countries like my own, the feasible and realistic approach to population and sustainable development would be to find the balance between our development needs and the resources available to support them.

We believe that in addition to national and regional action, appropriate institutional measures in terms of coordination and collaboration amongst United Nations bodies and commissions would need to be addressed first, starting perhaps with an energized and revitalized UNFPA with new approaches and ideas for the population challenges of the next two decades. There would be need also, in our view, adequately to strengthen regional and subregional offices of UNFPA to respond effectively to the needs of Member countries.

We welcome the call to strengthen and enlarge the role of the UNFPA through the establishment of its own separate board; we do so in the expectation that this will enhance the effective implementation of the Cairo Programme.

We also see the need to review the role, composition and mandate of the current Population Commission, especially if it is to be the mechanism charged with the follow-up action for the Cairo Programme. We think these institutional arrangements must be linked to a better and more effective delivery of the Cairo outcomes and must be looked at closely by this Assembly at an early stage to ensure speedy implementation.

The institutional arrangements within the United Nations system must of course be considered against the background of the difficult financial environment now facing the international community. At the same time, there can be no doubt that our Organization must move to give reality to the commitments and the spirit of Cairo for the benefit especially of the very poor and needy amongst us. Otherwise, there would be little meaning and little value to the work which we have all invested in and which matured in Cairo.

Just as we set out in Cairo to move the population debate and approach beyond family planning, we should in the same manner act, and act rapidly, to translate and move those commitments in the Programme beyond words. The Cairo Conference, after all, was about people, and its success will be measured largely by its impact on the lives of all our peoples.

Mr. Mumbengegwi (Zimbabwe): It gives me great pleasure to address the General Assembly as we review for the first time the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo just over two months ago. May I at the outset take this opportunity to thank President Hosni Mubarak, the Government and the people of Egypt for the warm welcome and generous hospitality that were accorded to us throughout our stay in Egypt.

Let me also pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and her staff for their tireless efforts in the preparatory process for the Conference as well as in the organization of the

Conference itself. Their commitment and hard work complemented the determination and vision of all the States Members of this Organization in making the Conference a success.

Never before Cairo had population and development issues been addressed in an integrated manner by so many countries, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals. With some 183 countries participating in the Conference, the very level of attendance and the richness and intensity of the debate on issues of common concern to all of humankind — despite the differences in our cultures, backgrounds and beliefs — bore clear testimony to the importance that the entire international community attaches to issues of population growth, quality of life and sustainable development.

Out of this process of exhaustive debate, intense negotiations, patience and mutual accommodation, we emerged from Cairo with a consensus Programme of Action that clearly spells out the interrelationships between population and development. The Programme of Action also contains recommendations for the comprehensive integration of population concerns with developmental issues such as economic growth and the eradication of poverty. The Programme of Action contains measures for the incorporation of demographic concerns into environmental and developmental efforts, and in this regard should enable Governments to integrate population issues into their planning and decision-making processes. Indeed, the Programme of Action recognizes that the interrelationship between population and the environment must address not only population size and rapid growth rates, but also the crucial issue of wasteful production and consumption patterns.

Zimbabwe is pleased to note that rather than seek to renegotiate the results of the two previous major conferences on population — the World Population Plan of Action of 1974 and the Mexico City Declaration of 1984 — the Cairo Conference actually built upon these milestone agreements. The Conference indeed reaffirmed the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action, including the sovereign right of each nation to formulate and implement its own population policies in accordance with national objectives and needs; the interrelatedness of population and development; the recognition that population policies are constituent elements of socio-economic development policies; the right of women to complete integration in the development process, particularly through equal access to education and equal participation in social, economic, cultural and political life; and the right of individuals and couples to choose freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.

Zimbabwe believes in putting people, as individuals and as groups, at the centre of development efforts, not least in our population policies and programmes. Accordingly, we welcome the emphasis in the Cairo Programme of Action on individual choices and responsibilities and those of couples in the area of family planning and reproductive health services. It was clearly recognized in Cairo that issues of population growth and development cannot be divorced from those of the empowerment of women, their equality, better health care and access to education. Indeed, the Cairo Programme of Action places women at the centre of the new comprehensive approach to issues relating to reproductive decision-making and the overall development process. At the same time, the Programme of Action also recognizes the need for men to take equal responsibility in the full range of issues related to equity, health and family matters.

Zimbabwe has made some progress with regard to the empowerment of women since its independence 14 years ago. The Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982, for instance, conferred for the first time majority status on all women above the age of 18. This recognized the right of women to take personal decisions on all matters affecting their lives. Until then women, whatever their age, were the wards of their fathers before marriage and the wards of their husbands after marriage. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985 ensured that women received an equitable share of property and the payment of maintenance upon divorce.

Despite these important changes, however, Zimbabwe is engaged in an ongoing process of reviewing the legal system, particularly those areas relating to inheritance and to the custody of children.

The fact that the Programme of Action recognizes reproductive rights as human rights which have to be respected and protected where they exist and promoted where they do not is a remarkable achievement.

We believe that women should have access to quality family planning services, which we regard as a means to protect reproductive rights as well as to promote maternal and child health. It is in the context of reproductive health that we view with concern the high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity in many developing countries. Much of this mortality and morbidity is related to the high incidence of unsafe and illegal abortions. My delegation is aware of, and indeed took part in, the lengthy discussions which took place on how the Programme of Action should deal with the issue of abortion. We are satisfied with the final conclusion on this matter and would reiterate that Zimbabwe does not regard abortion as a method of family planning. We believe that the provision of effective, quality contraceptive information and services, as well as other reproductive health services, should be the goal, in order to obviate, as much as possible, the resort to abortion.

In adopting the Cairo Programme of Action, we agreed on specific goals and recommendations on such interrelated areas as infant and maternal mortality, life expectancy, education, and reproductive health and family planning. The Programme of Action established concrete estimates of the financial resources which will be required for its implementation. But as the Secretary-General of the Conference cautioned at the closing meeting, on 13 September:

> "Without resources, ... the Programme of Action will remain a paper promise. We need a commitment from all countries, industrialized countries as well as developing countries, that they will take full responsibility in this regard". *(A/CONF.171/13/Add.1, p. 36)*

While we fully acknowledge that the larger portion of resources for population activities and related programmes are the responsibility of national Governments, it is imperative that the international community provide new and additional resources to support these activities and programmes. We believe that the resource requirements contained in the Programme of Action, though substantial, can be attained given the necessary commitment and political will.

Zimbabwe believes that the process of the International Conference on Population and Development demonstrated the importance of the links and partnerships that can be forged with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The dynamic role that these groups played in the Conference clearly testified to the catalytic and innovative approaches non-governmental organizations have and can have in the implementation of population programmes. My delegation therefore attaches great importance to Chapter XV of the Programme of Action, on partnership with the non-governmental sector.

In recalling that only last month, on 20 October, the General Assembly marked the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), I would be remiss if I did not underscore the significant role played by the Fund in ensuring the success of the Cairo Conference. Many of the proposals and recommendations contained in the Cairo Programme of Action have for a long time now been in the process of implementation by the UNFPA in the field. We believe that the UNFPA is well placed to play the lead coordinating role among United Nations agencies in the implementation of the new, integrated approach to population and development. The Fund will need the close support of all Member States in this regard.

The Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference does not stand in isolation. There is a definite continuity between this Programme of Action and such recent landmark global undertakings as the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the expected conclusions of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women next year, and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 1996. The Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference is indeed an integral part of the global consensus for sustained and sustainable development.

Mr. McKinnon (New Zealand): For the first time, at the Cairo Conference on Population and Development the international community addressed population growth in the broader context of achieving sustainable development. This is a key departure, opening a new path forward into the twenty-first century.

Population is no longer seen in Malthusian terms of limiting numbers through narrowly defined family-planning programmes to avoid the consequences of what was called a "population explosion". Nor is development alone seen as the panacea which once it was.

Instead, the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference reflects a shared commitment by developed and developing countries to slowing population growth and improving the quality of life of all citizens. The Programme highlights in a positive way the need for urgent action in achieving sustainable population growth.

That is not to say that the Conference was without controversy. Indeed, the Programme of Action agreed is remarkable precisely because it draws together issues marginalized in the past because they were considered too sensitive or too difficult to handle. For the first time, reproductive and sexual health rights and the issue of unsafe abortion were put on the international agenda. The search for consensus language in these areas served an important purpose in clearing away misunderstandings and resulted ultimately in agreements which will underpin implementation of the Programme of Action by the international community.

Other core aspects of the Programme to which we attach importance relate to women and adolescents. We welcome the focus in the Programme on gender equity and the need to improve the political, social, economic and health status of women in order to achieve population and development goals. We also consider it appropriate that the Programme acknowledges the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents, given that the youth population is the fastest growing population sector in many countries.

The value of the Programme lies in the fact that it is both comprehensive and coherent. It draws together the multiple strands of the population and development nexus, without compromising the value of the document as a practical blueprint for action.

Agreement on the Programme of Action has brought us now to a critical stage. We need to ensure that the enormous effort that the international community put into the Cairo Conference is carried forward and that the advances we have made are not lost.

Progress towards sustainable population growth must spring from actions taken by individuals and groups of people in society at every level. The message from Cairo is that the Programme of Action has no single owner. The Programme is addressed not just to Governments but also to the private sector and non-governmental organizations, which have played such a valuable role to date on population issues. Furthermore, the Programme contemplates action at local, national, regional and international levels.

My Government has begun to consider the implications for New Zealand of relevant aspects of the Programme of Action. Many of the Programme's actions are already enshrined in domestic legislation and consistent with national policies. In some areas further progress could be made. Issues of particular importance to New Zealand include ensuring provision of appropriate community-based education and information on reproductive and sexual health and a further strengthening of Maori and Pacific Island women's opportunities for equity.

We will work hard to ensure that the perspectives of the Maori — the indigenous people of New Zealand — find appropriate reflection in relevant population-related policies and programmes. At the Cairo Conference my delegation was a strong advocate for chapter VI of the Programme of Action. That chapter should assist Governments in tailoring programmes that are responsive to the needs of particular sectors of society, including indigenous people, older people and people with disabilities.

The Programme recognizes that the nature of population and development needs varies both between and within countries and also from region to region. In this regard, the results of the regional preparatory meetings, as well as the Conference outcome itself, will provide a valuable resource and catalyst for further action at the regional level.

In the South Pacific region the process of preparing for and participating in the Cairo Conference has brought about a new awareness of the need to address the issues of population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development in an integrated fashion. Population growth is high in the region. Land resources, obviously, are scarce. As the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development from our region articulates, population concerns can be just as real for those living in countries with small populations as they are for those in countries with large populations. Through its bilateral aid programmes, New Zealand works with partner Governments of the South Pacific on a range of projects related to aspects of population and development. While our assistance is modest, we think it is well directed. We will be considering our official development assistance allocations in the light of the Programme of Action, ensuring, for example, that population and development issues are discussed during our regular dialogue with aid partners. We will also continue to support multilateral agencies working in the field of population activities, and we were very pleased to announce recently a 20 per cent increase in our 1995 contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

At the international level the United Nations will remain a primary forum for maintaining the political momentum among Member States for carrying forward implementation of the Programme of Action. As identified in the Programme, regular review by the

General Assembly will be necessary. We will wish to ensure that any reporting requirements by Member States are realistic and tie in with existing obligations.

United Nations system follow-up to the Conference is also a central element of the Programme. Determining the precise roles of the relevant intergovernmental bodies and the organs of the United Nations system will be a detailed task, given the range of actors involved and the need to minimize overlap in activities. We look forward to a comprehensive review of arrangements at the 1995 session of the Economic and Social Council and hope to have the benefit of a detailed report from the Secretariat to assist in this process.

At this stage we do not believe there is a case for new institutional or governance structures. Instead, we expect the Economic and Social Council review will focus on clarifying the respective roles of the Population Division, the Economic and Social Council, the Population Commission, UNFPA and other United Nations organizations involved in implementing and monitoring the Cairo outcomes. A central objective will be to put population in the mainstream of the work of the United Nations development system.

Prior to the Economic and Social Council review we would expect the organs and agencies of the United Nations system to begin the process of adjusting their activities to take into account the outcomes of the Conference. In this regard, we welcome the steps taken by the UNFPA to broaden the scope of its programmes to ensure that the reproductive-health component is fully integrated. We expect that the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and of the UNFPA will wish to give further consideration to improving its governance of UNFPA, recognizing that agency's central role in the practical implementation of aspects of the Programme of Action relating to reproductive health and family planning.

It is clear that successful implementation of the Programme of Action will depend on the continuing political and practical commitment of the States represented here in the Assembly. Ultimately, however, the Programme belongs to individual men and women and to the children of tomorrow. The Programme aims to enhance their choices, their opportunities and their well-being. It provides a framework for individuals, groups and societies to change their destinies. We can and must act on it now.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Egypt for its outstanding organizational efforts and its warm hospitality during the International Conference on Population and Development, held in September 1994.

We express our sincere appreciation to Mrs. Nafis Sadik and the members of her able team, particularly David Payton, for their excellent work in terms of substantive and organizational preparation for the Conference.

After several months of intense preparations and consultations and thorough discussions in Cairo, the International Conference on Population and Development was able to achieve great success in important areas. I would like to focus specifically on five issues.

One of the major outcomes of the Conference in Cairo was the confirmation at the global level that population questions must constitute an essential part of development policy. We thus have to follow an integrated approach with regard to all relevant national and international endeavours.

It is worth noting that previous population conferences concentrated almost exclusively on family planning. At Cairo the international community recognized that decisions related to human fertility were influenced by a range of factors much wider than the availability of family-planning services alone. General education, health, status of women and gender-relations issues are also of primary importance in this regard.

We therefore welcome the wider focus at the Cairo Conference compared with that of previous population Conferences. We are particularly satisfied that it was possible to agree in Cairo on quantitative targets in the areas of primary education and infant mortality, as well as maternal mortality and morbidity, which hopefully will diminish the shocking gap in these areas between industrialized and developing countries.

Thirdly, the Cairo Conference also provided an opportunity to focus more specifically on the gender issue. It became quite clear that the advancement of women and the achievement of true equality between women and men is the key to any viable solution of the population question.

Fourthly, a further important issue, which has been developed through the debate, is the concept of reproductive health. In our view, this concept constitutes an important step forward, a concept which the international community should build upon and develop further.

Finally, we are also highly encouraged by the fact that the debate in Cairo was not hampered by North-South divisiveness and that it was possible to achieve consensus, particularly as regards the financial issues. There were promising indications concerning the readiness of donor countries to provide adequate funding for population programmes. This readiness was also signalled at the recent Pledging Conference for the United Nations Population Fund. We hope that the meeting between the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Development Assistance Committee later this month in Paris will confirm this.

The broad agreement reached at Cairo helped to clarify what was truly at stake: the welfare of millions of women now "crippled by unbridled fertility", to use the words of Fred Sai of Ghana, the Chairman of the Main Committee, at the closing session of the Conference; the welfare of their children and husbands; and the overall prospects for the peaceful and sustainable development of all mankind within the carrying capacity of the planet.

I should like to make a few remarks on the follow-up to the Conference.

Austria appreciates the decision of the Conference to use existing institutions and mechanisms to secure implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action. This will also guarantee that institutional arrangements relating to follow-up to the Conference reflect the interrelationship of population and development issues.

Furthermore, we look forward to the discussion at the operational segment of the Economic and Social Council on the implications of the recommendations of the Conference for the operational activities of the United Nations in the field of development. In this respect, the Economic and Social Council should be given the benefit of a review by the Secretary-General of the mandates and roles of the various United Nations entities and intergovernmental bodies seized of population issues, so that the Council may formulate recommendations on the better use of existing capacities or relative advantages.

We call on the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and on the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to further intensify their cooperation, based on their respective comparative advantages, to ensure that existing capacity within the United Nations system is utilized to the fullest possible extent.

In addition, the Population Commission should be encouraged at its next session, in April 1995, to examine its role in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference and to report to the Economic and Social Council on this issue.

Finally, we believe that the question of providing the United Nations Population Fund with its own executive board merits further consideration, as provided for in resolution 48/162. The need to create a separate executive board should be considered to enable the UNFPA to carry out even more effectively the various operational tasks that fall to it in the wake of the Conference and allow it to focus better on the needs and priorities in the field of operations led by the United Nations Population Fund.

Mr. Popescu (Romania): By a happy coincidence, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development took place in 1994 — the year marking the passage of two decades since the first World Population Conference, which was held in Bucharest in August 1974, and the 25 years of existence of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the third International Conference on Population and Development. We are grateful for its hospitality and for the excellent conditions that were provided, enabling the participants to complete their work successfully.

We should also like to compliment Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of UNFPA, who, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development, put a tremendous amount of work, energy and enthusiasm into the preparations for the Conference.

Romania has always been concerned about the population problem and issues of population and development, and aware of the UNFPA's specific programmes and activities. It was for this reason that my

Government attached great importance to the Cairo Conference. Proof of this is the fact that the President of the Senate went to Cairo, as the personal envoy of the President of Romania, to deliver a message to the Conference. As the President said in his message, one of the first measures taken in Romania after the December 1989 revolution was the abolition of the restrictive legislation on abortion and contraceptives, thus ending the demographic policy imposed by the old totalitarian regime, a policy based on the birth rate. Beginning with the new Constitution approved by referendum in December 1991, several new laws have been adopted to ensure fundamental rights and social protection for the family, for mother and child and for youth.

In Romania we are now facing new demographic trends. These can be seen in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, too. The recent population and housing census, which was completed successfully with UNFPA assistance, for which we are most grateful, shows a severe decline in the fertility rate, a high level of infant mortality and an increase in the proportion and number of elderly persons. After considering these demographic imbalances, a panel of national experts on the subject "Population of Romania — Evolution and Perspectives" recently proposed the establishment of an office for demographic surveys and projections to undertake research into current and future population changes in the country and to draw the appropriate conclusions.

Over the two decades since the Bucharest Conference many parts of the world have undergone remarkable demographic, social, economic, environmental and political changes. Many countries have made substantial progress in expanding access to reproductive health care, lowering birth rates, lowering death rates and raising the expectation of life.

The basic principles and objectives of the 1974 first World Population Plan of Action remain valid, but they were completed and developed at the Mexico City Conference in 1984 and last September at the Cairo Conference to reflect the changes of the past 20 years. Formulated on the basis of the experience of the years 1974-94, the Cairo Programme of Action takes into consideration the unmet needs, the new challenges and the urgency of the population problem and indicates the strategies, planning and resources required to tackle it through the joint efforts of the whole international community. It contains a clear set of guidelines to enable Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to address collectively the critical issues of the relationship between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development at the end of this century and the beginning of the next millennium.

My Government reiterates its support for the principles and objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action. We attach great importance to the principle that the right to development is a universal and inalienable right, and in this respect we welcome the recognition by the Conference that countries with economies in transition need to be fully integrated into the world economy. The Conference proved its responsiveness and spirit of realism in recognizing the current problems of population and development in the countries with economies in transition, and requesting the international community to continue to promote a supportive economic environment for them, as well as for developing countries, in efforts to achieve sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development.

In the light of the difficult economic and social problems these countries face at present, the Cairo Conference agreed that they should also receive assistance for population and development activities. As far as Romania is concerned, as a country in transition in Eastern Europe, it will need further international technical assistance in family planning, for the continued training of medical personnel and those employed in population-related fields, and in child survival and health in order to reduce the rate of infant mortality, as well as in such fields as population and environment and the employment of women.

The Cairo Conference and its Programme of Action draw attention to the importance of partnership with the non-governmental sector. My delegation fully agrees that the partnership between Governments, international institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should be strengthened in implementing the existing programmes for population and development, as well as in identifying new areas of cooperation. We welcome the UNFPA initiative in organizing national and regional meetings to exchange ideas about how Governments and non-governmental organizations can increasingly work together. Bucharest could host such a meeting for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Cairo Conference was a success, but its final success will depend on the ability of the international community to act in turning the recommendations of the Conference into action, and on how quickly end efficiently the goals, objectives and actions of the Programme of Action will be implemented. It is just the beginning of a new phase of a long-range strategy for dealing with the issues of population and development which began in 1974.

International cooperation has always been essential for the implementation of population and development programmes during the past two decades, and it should continue to be so in the case of the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. The positive evolution of international cooperation in population and development, including the increase in the number of financial donors, and successful cooperation among the developing countries make us optimistic in that respect. A good sign in this context was the fact that at the Conference both the South and the North agreed without much discussion on a global cost-sharing for population activities by the year 2015 on a 2 to 1 basis. We are also encouraged by the strong support for the UNFPA programmes and activities demonstrated at the recent United Nations Pledging Conference.

The UNFPA's resources for 1995 are expected to rise, we are informed, to approximately $300 million, the highest level in the history of the Fund. I am pleased to remind members that Romania, despite its current economic and financial difficulties, has increased its voluntary contribution to UNFPA for 1995 by 30 per cent, thus clearly demonstrating the importance the Romanian Government attaches to UNFPA and to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

We recognize the importance of the active role regional organizations should play in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference, and in our view the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) can act effectively in addressing specific population and development issues relevant to the region, particularly to Central and Eastern Europe. Bucharest could also host a review meeting of the United Nations/ECE Member States, whenever it is considered appropriate, on matters relating to the follow-up to the Cairo Conference. The meeting should be organized by the ECE in close cooperation with UNFPA.

Speaking of UNFPA, it is obvious that the Fund, as well as the United Nations Population Division, and, of course, the United Nations Population Commission, have an important role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and they should have our full support.

Before concluding, I should like to mention that my delegation supports the Conference recommendation to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session contained in document A/CONF/171/13, report of the International Conference on Population and Development, to endorse the Programme of Action as adopted by the Conference.

Mr. Urbina (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The International Conference on Population and Development was the culmination of an intensive process of global agreements, which proved to be highly innovative in promoting cooperation in population issues and in strengthening recognition of the interdependence between population, the environment, economic growth and development in general. Mexico welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Programme of Action that led the many valuable ideas and criteria of the international community towards a common resolve and cooperation.

The Mexican delegation wishes to emphasize some of the results of the Conference which, in our judgement, deserve priority attention.

First of all, we recognize that the preparatory activities that began in 1991 not only made it possible for the process to come to a successful conclusion but also produced innumerable outcomes with their own importance and impact. Particularly relevant were the results of the five regional conferences and the work and conclusions of the six expert meetings, as well as those of the many symposia and seminars promoted by the secretariat of the Conference. All these activities contributed to increasing public awareness of the subject, to the organization and dissemination of accumulated knowledge and to a critical assessment of the advances made and the challenges faced by population programmes. We must now make the best possible use of all the results obtained, which can be of great importance to the implementation at the national and regional levels of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference.

As regards the Programme of Action, it is important to emphasize that the participants were unanimous in giving the highest priority to intensifying international cooperation for the eradication of poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We are certain that the elaboration of the "Agenda for Development" and the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development will help us to make progress in dealing with these problems.

Such fundamental topics as education, gender equity and reproductive health were also emphasized in the Programme of Action. The greatest progress may have been achieved on reproductive health, which has an extremely important place in the Programme. We wish to emphasize in particular the recognition of reproductive rights, the reiteration of the principle that family planning is an indispensable instrument in guaranteeing the right of couples and individuals over their reproductive processes, the aim of ensuring that each pregnancy is planned and each child is wanted, the recognition that abortion is a public-health problem and must be faced as such, and the importance given to protecting the health of adolescents — and especially to use information, education and communication activities to ensure more responsible behaviour.

Furthermore, the basic rights of individuals were reaffirmed as a principle for any action in the field, as was the sovereign right of each country to formulate and implement the population policies it deems appropriate, taking into account the diversity of current conditions and respecting specific religious and ethical values.

My delegation wishes to highlight the Conference's conclusions on a very topical subject — international migration. This subject is one of the clearest examples of the interdependence of countries. The fundamental factor underlying international migration is economic: the supply of and demand for qualified labour. Its end result is a productive complementarity reflected in shared benefits, not only in the economic but also in the cultural and social fields, due to the contributions made by migrants to the receiving countries. Refugees and migrants seeking asylum require specific attention, tailored to each situation.

It is therefore important to adopt a global approach to this phenomenon of migration, an approach that includes promoting dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin and countries of destination; guaranteeing the economic and social integration of migrants in the countries of destination; eliminating all discriminatory practices, especially against women, children and the elderly; protecting migrants against racism, ethnocentrism and xenophobia, which are unacceptable in educated and advanced societies at the end of the twentieth century. In a word, in order to maintain harmonious international relations, it is essential to guarantee the exercise by migrants of the basic human rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ratified in the Programme of Action of the Conference. To that end, we wish to draw the General Assembly's attention to the proposal made in Cairo to convene an international conference on this subject. We are convinced that in so doing we would be giving international migration the attention it deserves as an issue that has the greatest relevance for the world at the end of this century.

We believe that it is essential to concentrate, from now on, on identifying more specific commitments to international cooperation with a view to implementing the Programme of Action we have adopted. The agreements reached at the Conference should lead to the elaboration of programmes on priority subjects and concrete commitments, so that the developed countries and international agencies can share with the developing countries the benefits of scientific and technological progress in a new framework of united partnership for proper development.

With this objective in mind, we wish to inform the General Assembly that there will be a meeting tomorrow of the Executive Board of the Committee of High-Level Governmental Experts — over which Mexico has the honour of presiding — which will be open to all the countries members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and in which the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations will participate. The purpose of the meeting will be to analyse the proposals for the implementation of the Regional Latin American and Caribbean Plan of Action on Population and Development, in the light of the results of the Cairo Conference. Another meeting will take place in which international agencies involved in this subject will participate, and they will be requested to lend their technical and financial support for this regional Plan. We are confident that this will make an important contribution to ensuring that the world consensus recently adopted will take the most concrete form possible. We will consider, in particular, chapters XIII, XIV, XV and XVI of the International Conference's Programme of Action.

We wish gratefully to acknowledge the work done by the secretariat of the Conference, which was decisive for its success. We wish also to impress upon the General Assembly the need to provide greater financial support to the different branches of the Secretariat involved in this subject — first, to the United Nations Population Fund, the most important body for assisting countries in the implementation of the Programme, and also to the Population Division, members of which served as a joint secretariat with that of UNFPA; its work confirmed once again its central importance as the body generating and disseminating the knowledge needed to evaluate and follow up world population trends.

The secretariats of the regional Commissions — in our case, ECLAC — also require greater support, because we are convinced that the subject of population must be included in the agendas of meetings held at the ministerial level and must be constantly addressed in order to ensure that the measures are effective and relevant and appropriate to the diverse contexts of our regions. At its last plenary session, ECLAC decided to establish an ad hoc sessional committee to follow up the Regional Plan of Action on population.

Lastly, we are convinced that we must strengthen the Population Commission of the Economic and Social Council as the basic intergovernmental body for the follow-up to the Programme of Action.

We feel that we should all be gratified by the success of the Conference. Now, we must all strengthen our commitment to ensuring that the world consensus moves from proposals to concrete action.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The adoption on 13 September 1994 of the Programme of Action by the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo was one of the most important milestones in the international community's pursuit of a more comprehensive approach to development.

Debate on the Programme of Action at the various preparatory stages preceding and during the Conference was as widespread as it was intense, involving not only official delegations and those non-governmental organizations traditionally involved in population issues, but a much broader section of the public and the media as well. One can truly say that popular involvement in the discussion on the Programme of Action attained a level which was indeed global.

The list of Member States, observers, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which attended the Conference is impressive. Equally impressive were the preparations made by the Egyptian authorities to host the Conference.

In joining others in thanking the Government of Egypt for the excellent facilities, staff and services placed at the disposal of the Conference, Malta would like to reaffirm its appreciation for the warm hospitality with which the people of Egypt and in particular the people of Cairo, welcomed participants.

Egypt's contribution to the success of the Conference was not limited to its role of host. During the negotiations the delegation of Egypt left its mark as a consensus-builder, helping to bring about changes which, without doubt, facilitated the adoption of the Programme of Action.

May I also express the appreciation of my delegation for the efficient manner in which the Conference was organized and serviced by its secretariat. The leadership and contribution of the Secretary-General, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, were unique and instrumental in the final outcome of the Conference.

This delegation would like to express its appreciation for the inspiring manner in which Mr. Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt presided over the Conference and for the hard work of all members of the Bureau and of the officers of the Main Committee during the negotiations.

The net effect of the global interactive dialogue before and during the Conference could not but benefit proceedings as indeed it did. Apart from cultivating awareness on a number of issues which could otherwise have been marginalized, this dialogue helped to enrich the document with important perspectives which favour its implementation.

Population and development policies require more than the assent of Governments and international organizations. Their success depends on the active support of our populations, who are the key protagonists and decision-makers.

Just as peoples can be supportive of policies which are in harmony or coincide with their convictions, so is it likely that they would resist anything which is alien to cherished principles. In this respect, the Programme of Action places the right emphasis on respect for religious and ethical values and for diverse cultural backgrounds, respect which is so essential for such wide-ranging goals.

The Programme of Action notes that

> "The maturing process undergone by international cooperation in the field of population and

development has accentuated a number of difficulties and shortcomings that need to be addressed". *(A/CONF.171/13, para. 14.2)*

The direction from Cairo is that such policies can never be viewed in isolation. Our approach should be wider in scope and take account of the manner in which all these policies are interrelated.

Indeed, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his recommendations on the Agenda for Development, published earlier this week, again stresses the need to view social and developmental issues in an integrated manner. My Government continues to support this approach.

As my Minister for Home Affairs and Social Development, Mr. Louis Galea, stated in his address to the Cairo Conference, our global responsibility for population is equalled by our global responsibility for global resources. He said that we, as the human race, must ensure that these resources are managed by using a global perspective and according to global needs.

The problem we collectively face today is to a large extent a problem of the type of socio-economic development and resource distribution and utilization that has taken place in the last few decades on this planet — and is still taking place.

The Programme of Action adopted in Cairo can contribute to resolving these issues, if all its parts are implemented, within the context of the principles which inspire it.

A selective approach, which emphasizes the implementation of a restrictive demographic orientation and sacrifices the developmental perspective, would be detrimental not only to the success of the Programme of Action itself but, more important still, to the confidence which our populations have in such conferences and gatherings.

My Government is confident that this will not be the case. We are convinced that there exists a broad-based international awareness which will prevent the adoption of unidimensional stances. A spirit of solidarity is taking root worldwide. Past attitudes of isolation, division and disharmony have, in many instances, been replaced by values which underline our common destiny and hence our common rights, our common responsibilities and our common obligations.

Nearly 30 years ago my country introduced the concept of the common heritage of mankind for the first time in this Assembly. This week that initiative is bearing fruit in Kingston, Jamaica.

We believe that population and development deserve to be viewed within the broader perspective of the common heritage. Only in so viewing the matter will we do justice to the efforts made in Cairo to produce a Programme of Action which, apart from reservations which we still have with regard to the inadequate protection of the rights of the unborn child, offers a positive strategy which integrates population issues within the much wider context of development.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's sincere thanks to the Government and people of Egypt for making all arrangements to successfully hold the International Conference on Population and Development. We particularly appreciate Mrs. Nafis Sadik's efforts in skilfully guiding the preparatory process and the Conference itself.

I wish to associate myself with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77. I should, however, like to take this opportunity to make a few points.

The Cairo Conference was historic in highlighting the interlinkages between the issues of population, development and the environment. This holistic approach is an important achievement and marked a significant step forward compared with the two earlier conferences held in Bucharest and Mexico City. Cairo also re-emphasized the critical need for international solidarity and cooperation on these issues in an increasingly interdependent world.

The 20-year Programme of Action that we adopted in Cairo has very aptly underlined the fact that priority attention must be accorded to sustained economic growth and development, particularly the eradication of poverty in developing countries. It cannot be over-emphasized that the goals of the Conference will not be reached if the number of people living in absolute poverty continues to increase, particularly in the developing countries.

An important achievement of the Conference was its success in establishing a clear link between population, unsustainable production and wasteful consumption patterns. Developed countries have a special responsibility for remedial action in this regard.

The crucial question that the international community faces in the post-Conference period is the issue of translating into reality the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. In this context, I would like to underscore some elements in our efforts to ensure the proper follow-up of the Cairo document.

First, national Governments have rightly been assigned the prime responsibility of formulating and implementing appropriate policies and programmes to carry out the provisions of the Programme of Action. The provisions of the Programme have to be applied taking fully into account the diverse traditions and religious and ethical values of the people of each country concerned. The central role of the family and the upholding of moral values in connection with family planning and related issues should be highlighted.

National efforts of the developing countries, however, must be supplemented by increased international cooperation. The creation of an international economic environment conducive to the promotion of sustained economic growth and development in poorer countries is crucial to ensure timely and full implementation of the Programme of Action.

We believe that the following issues are cardinal to enabling developing countries to take additional measures in the fields of population and development: intensified efforts on the part of the developed countries to implement the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent is essential; new and additional resource flows to the developing countries on population and development issues need to be ensured; a durable solution of the debt problem of the developing countries which hampers their overall socio-economic development; market access for products from developing countries has to be facilitated and trade liberalization policies under the Uruguay Round agreements should have a favourable impact on these countries; the special needs of the least developed countries should be taken into account and special financial and technical assistance should be provided to them in order to assist their population and development activities; and capacity-building of the developing countries, particularly the least developed, should be given due importance. In this regard, technology transfer and sharing of research findings on population and development issues need to be highlighted.

The empowerment of women and their enhanced participation in development activities has been highlighted in the Programme of Action and deserves special priority in post-Cairo activities. The issues of education, primary health care and access to information remain high in our agenda. Human resources development, specially through enhanced access to education and training should be placed at the centre of our development efforts. Sharing and exchange of information on population programmes and activities should be emphasized. In this context, subregional and regional cooperation on population activities should be encouraged and strengthened.

Population policies and programmes are to be implemented taking fully into account the special needs of the poor and vulnerable sections of society. It has to be ensured that economic reform measures do not adversely affect the poor. In this regard, the Bretton Woods institutions should pay more attention to the social impact and social safety-nets while formulating and implementing structural adjustment measures.

We believe that the outcome of the Cairo Conference will meaningfully contribute to the preparatory processes of forthcoming international conferences, particularly the social Summit, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat-II). We feel that population and development concerns will be duly reflected in the final outcomes of these conferences.

The United Nations should continue to play an important role in the field of population and development and particularly to make operational the Programme of Action. In this regard, the existing mechanisms of the United Nations in the population and development field should be reviewed and strengthened taking into account Chapter XVI of the Programme of Action. Given the wide range of issues dealt with by the Conference and the number of recommendations contained in the Programme of Action, it will certainly be necessary to involve a number of United Nations bodies and agencies.

In this context, better coordination, particularly between the Population Commission, the Population Division and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has to be ensured. We feel that there should be an intergovernmental agency charged with the responsibility of closely overseeing the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme of Action. In this regard the role and mandate of the Population

Commission needs to be reviewed through, *inter alia*, integrating development aspects with population issues. Strengthening the role of the UNFPA in mobilizing resources and implementing programmes should be given active consideration. The question of establishing a separate executive board of the UNFPA should also be considered in this regard.

Periodic review of the implementation of the Programme of Action is essential not only to review progress achieved but also to suggest new measures to achieve the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. We feel that the reporting system of the United Nations in the field of population should be streamlined. The developing countries should be assisted in establishing national data bases on population and also in preparing reports.

As we underlined during the Cairo Conference, our Government has accorded high priority to policies aimed at a reduction of the population growth rate. Ours is an integrated policy covering basic health care, particularly of children, and family welfare, human resource development through education and training, alleviation of poverty and empowerment of women. We are making continuous efforts fully to integrate women in national development activities and have placed increasing emphasis on creating employment opportunities for women. Some non-governmental organizations are doing a commendable job in helping women, particularly those in the villages, to start small business enterprises. Working women even in remote villages are gradually becoming more conscious about reproductive health and family size.

Eradication of poverty is receiving the utmost priority in our population and development activities. The Government has allocated more than 30 per cent of the annual development budget to the social sectors in recent years.

Ensuring education for all, particularly of the girl child, and provision of basic health facilities are crucial for making population policies and programmes successful. Despite limited resources and technological constraints we have been implementing an ambitious plan in these two crucial areas. Our Government is implementing a long-term programme with respect to the provision of education to girls. Education for the girl child has been made free up to grade VIII and the Government is providing stipends to girl students at the secondary level. Our intensive efforts in the field of child health care have resulted in a dramatic increase in child immunization and a decline in child mortality rates. The Government has already taken appropriate steps to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action. As the task is immense, it will require sustained and enhanced international support in all fields.

In conclusion, I should like to underscore the need for establishing a new and genuine global partnership based on shared but differentiated responsibilities in order to achieve the targets of the Programme of Action. A strong political will is also crucial to ensure that our commitments are translated into concrete actions so that our future generations will be able to live a better life.

Mr. Florencio (Brazil): Just over two months ago, the international community concluded the International Conference on Population and Development, with the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action. Our first words must necessarily be ones of deep gratitude to the Government of Egypt, for the impeccable manner in which it organized the Conference, to the Egyptian people, for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to delegations from around the world, and to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference, whose dedication and untiring efforts were instrumental in its success.

I should also like to reaffirm our appreciation of the support extended by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to our national preparatory process. This support allowed for wide discussion among all segments of Brazilian society on the issues under consideration, and for the forging of a consensus view that was taken by the Brazilian delegation to the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and to Cairo. The validity of this process has led to its adoption as a model for our preparations for other United Nations conferences to be held in coming years.

In the long history of deliberations on population issues the Cairo Conference can be considered a landmark from a number of perspectives. Foremost among these is the fact that the Conference clearly defined the strong interlinkage between population issues and the broader aspects of development policies as well as the importance of the human being as both the object and the agent of those issues.

This humanistic and developmental approach to population questions derives from the growing awareness that individual decisions should be taken at the individual level, while the improvement in the social and economic situation of individuals is the fundamental element for the achievement of population goals.

These two aspects of the question are clearly set out at the core of the decisions agreed upon at the Conference. Individuals must be given the means for the full realization of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. As is now abundantly evident, when couples — and, in particular, women — are in control of their own situation in all these domains, the control of population growth, through the control of fertility, will flow as a natural and voluntary consequence.

In this respect, the role of the State must be to ensure the conditions for the full and effective realization of these rights. For that reason, the Programme of Action sets out policies and recommendations in the essential fields of the empowerment of women and of improving the access to and the quality of public health and education services.

The International Conference on Population and Development was also important in that it provided a quantitative indication of the resources required for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

By assigning responsibility for the mobilization of some two thirds of these resources to the national level, the Conference recognized that the activities foreseen fall mainly in the domestic sphere. By identifying the need to obtain the remaining one third from international cooperation sources, however, the Conference also acknowledged that population issues are of global significance, a significance that stems not only from the moral imperative of the rich helping the poor but, essentially, from the fact that population factors have an impact on the entire international community.

It is gratifying to note that some industrialized nations have signalled their intention of living up to these commitments through enhanced financial support for international cooperation in the population field. It is our expectation that such commitments will effectively represent new and additional resources and not a mere reallocation away from other areas of cooperation. Furthermore, we hope such commitments will not fade along with the spotlight of international media and public attention that was focused on the stage of our deliberations in Cairo, as has been the case in the follow-up to other recent conferences.

The follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development is one of the main tasks conferred upon this session of the General Assembly. In this respect, my delegation is of the view that the fundamental institutional structure is already in place within the United Nations. What will be required is an adaptation of that structure to the enhanced scope of activities flowing from the Conference.

The Population Commission, on a par with other functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council, should be given the means with which to carry out the responsibilities of the intergovernmental monitoring of the recommendations and commitments of the Conference. This will require a review of the mandate, composition and working methods of the Commission.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), under the dynamic leadership of Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and with the guidance and oversight of its Executive Board, should retain the overall responsibility for the operational implementation of international cooperation in the population field.

The possibility of establishing a separate executive board for UNFPA, which was proposed by the Group of 77 in the context of the restructuring and revitalization of the economic, social and related sectors, was deferred until the Conference. The increased emphasis on international cooperation that will necessarily be required if the aims of the Programme of Action are to be achieved would, in the view of my delegation, warrant this measure. We are aware, however, that such a decision does not yet count on widespread support. It would seem that at the very least we should agree to dedicate one full session of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-UNFPA Executive Board exclusively to UNFPA affairs. Finally, the Population Division must be strengthened in order to carry out the vital analytical and statistical work in the population field.

The work of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres has witnessed an unprecedented set of world conferences and summits over the past decade. Beginning with the World Summit for Children, we have focused on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro, human rights in Vienna, the sustainable development of small island developing States in Bridgetown and now, population in Cairo. In coming years we will tackle the issues of social development in Copenhagen, of women, in Beijing, and of human settlements in Istanbul.

Remarkable as these achievements are, I should like to take this opportunity to refer to the proposal presented by the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim, at the opening of the general debate in the current session of the General Assembly, to the effect that a United Nations conference on development should be convened, at an appropriate time, in order to promote, in a wider conceptual framework, the integration into one synthetic and coherent ensemble the initiatives and programmes set out in this decade's sectoral conferences.

In conclusion, it is the view of the Brazilian delegation that the International Conference on Population and Development was a milestone by bringing a new approach to the population issue, an approach that recognized the human — and in particular women's — determining role in the matter. It was all the more noteworthy by its underscoring of the possibilities of international cooperation based on a frank and constructive dialogue that harmonized distinct perspectives.

In essence, the Cairo Conference represents an extraordinary outcome for the future of international relations, one that gave us all a profound example of reciprocal tolerance. It is an example that we hope will guide us well in our future deliberations in the economic and social fields.

Mr. Bhakta (India): My delegation is happy to be participating in this important meeting of the General Assembly to follow up the landmark International Conference on Population and Development recently concluded in Cairo, the third such conference. Following our earlier experiences in Romania and Mexico, my Government participated in all the preparatory meetings and in the Conference itself with very specific objectives.

First, we aimed to secure international acceptance of the interlinkage between population and development. Secondly, we sought to emphasize the fact that, in the context of developing countries, the main way to bring about development is by sustained economic growth. Thirdly, we reiterated that such sustained economic growth requires a supportive economic environment consisting, *inter alia*, of an open, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory and predictable international trading system where the burden of international debt can be reduced, where new and additional financial resources will be made available and where access to technology can be assured. Fourthly, we sought international acceptance of the estimate of resources required for supporting the Programme of Action in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition, particularly in the area of reproductive health and family planning. A natural corollary to this was to secure agreement from Member States on an increase in the external assistance component of these resource flows.

On balance, my delegation has reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the Conference. The consensus arrived at in Cairo, as we are all aware, is an extremely delicate one, which further emphasizes the need for the elements which went into the consensus to be respected by all parties concerned, and not singled out selectively for follow-up action. My delegation therefore sees the follow-up efforts that are under way as crucial for consolidating the gains of Cairo.

As a developing country, we are happy that the right to development has been included as a human right, and that provisions concerning the empowerment of women and the elimination of discrimination against them have been accepted. We are, in particular, gratified that the promotion of a supportive economic environment specifically enumerated in provisions of the agreed document was agreed to, and we are confident that the follow-up to the Conference will ensure specific measures to achieve it.

We joined the consensus on certain quantified goals in such areas as life expectancy, infant mortality and maternal mortality. We have observed with satisfaction that the estimates of resources required for supporting the Programme of Action in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition and their increase from between one fourth and one third were agreed to at the Conference. My delegation welcomes reiteration at the Conference of our own Government's position that the "20/20" proposal, stipulating that 20 per cent of official development assistance should be in the social sector, requires greater clarity and further discussion. We are hopeful that funds and agencies will take note that this concept has to be discussed further before being adopted in any manner.

My delegation was instrumental also in modifying formulations implying a *quid pro quo* for debt relief in exchange for domestic Government assistance on issues of population and development. We are grateful that no such *quid pro quo* was accepted at the Conference.

My delegation, like several others, was anxious at the start of the Conference about the controversy surrounding the references to abortion and the use of terms such as sexual and reproductive rights, safe motherhood, fertility regulations and reproductive health services. We were particularly happy that these controversies were resolved through the use of more acceptable terminology consensually agreed upon. My delegation supported the basic agreements that made such a consensus possible. We agree with the consensus that Governments should deal with the health impact of unsafe abortions, and that the prevention of unwanted pregnancies must be given highest priority, thereby eliminating the need for abortions. We also stressed during meetings of the Preparatory Committee that women who had unwanted pregnancies should have ready access to reliable information and compassionate assistance and to quality services in the event of medical crises arising from abortions. We have stressed that where abortion is not against the law it should be safe. These elements were endorsed by consensus at the Conference, and my Government is committed to making progress along these lines.

We would like especially to stress the need for access to newer technology with respect to matters and issues that were discussed and agreed upon at the Conference: the fields of family planning, reproductive health and infant survival without the imposition of prohibitive costs. In our delegation's view, resources required for implementing the Programme of Action adopted at Cairo need to be made available on a grant basis or on concessional terms, preferably through multilateral or United Nations agencies and without curtailment of external assistance in other developmental sectors. A mechanism also needs to be established for monitoring the flow of external assistance for implementing the Programme of Action *vis-à-vis* the global figures accepted at the Conference.

In conclusion, my delegation feels that the issue of a separate executive board for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) should be considered only when substantial resources become available to the Fund. As a developing country, India cannot agree to discussions on this issue unless additional resources are assured. We would also encourage consideration of the fact that, when a board is named it must represent the interests of the users of UNFPA funds, and not those of substantial donors alone. My delegation is committed to supporting any follow-up measures to the International Conference on Population and Development which may be arrived at consensually after intergovernmental discussions.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): In the 20 years since Bucharest, the international community has successfully forged a common vision and reached a global consensus on a Programme of Action that will serve as a blueprint from which each State will shape its own policies and programmes according to its specific needs and priorities.

The Cairo Conference was a great success, and we commend Mrs. Sadik and the secretariats of the specialized agencies and organizations that were involved for their excellent work. We would also convey our gratitude and appreciation to the Government and the people of Egypt for their warm hospitality and efficient management of the Conference facilities.

The international community has rightly, and appropriately at this moment in history, adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action that integrates population management issues with the overall resource development and management aimed at achieving social and political stability in all parts of the world.

Population and development perspectives, as outlined in the Programme of Action, indeed require our support in order to promote policies and strategies that would enhance sustained economic growth and sustainable development, with the direct participation of our people in all spheres of development.

The ultimate success of the process will obviously depend on the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, in the manner outlined in Chapter XIV of the document. A realistic estimate of the possibilities for success depends on a number of factors, and I wish to focus on two.

First, there is a need to establish realistic and practical strategies involving all sectors of the community at the national level, including overall Government commitments in terms of providing adequate funding and improving policies governing intersectoral strategies. Secondly, international support by donor agencies and multilateral organizations for national programmes will be essential in attaining the targets and goals set by the Cairo Programme of Action.

My delegation notes with much gratitude that a significant number of countries have pledged to increase their contributions towards the implementation of the Programme of Action. We take particular note of the United States Government's contribution of an estimated $40 million for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). My delegation also appreciates the fact that

UNFPA has already embarked on identifying mechanisms for implementing the Programme of Action in the Asia-Pacific region.

We are, however, aware of, and concerned at, the fact that for many developing countries the specific targets set in this document could be very difficult to achieve owing to their serious domestic fiscal situations, resulting from the downturn in commodity prices and from the generally unfavourable international trading environment.

Again in the context of developing countries, the lack of reliable data, skills and information technology adds to the difficulty in discerning realistic socio-economic indicators to provide appropriate guidelines in determining priorities in resource allocation in the medium and long term. Many developing countries, therefore, may not be in a position to adequately cope with the critical and initial stages of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

With this in mind, Papua New Guinea believes that international support, in the form of additional financial and technical assistance, must be directed more towards institutional capacity-building and the operational aspects of implementing the Programme and specific projects.

To facilitate the effective implementation of the Programme of Action at a practical level, the South Pacific island countries would place emphasis on capacity-building — including the establishment of training facilities and the financing of transport and communication infrastructure — and improving information technology to facilitate the establishment of a sound and factual database for planning purposes and to provide effective aid in decision-making.

Since education plays a very important role in terms both of human resource development and of the dissemination of information, Papua New Guinea is already using appropriate curriculum material in our school system to bring about a greater awareness among adolescents of sex education and reproductive health. National educational reform policies, for instance, emphasize the need for greater access to this information by the girl child, as well as basic, quality education for all. The literacy programmes of the National Education Department involve non-governmental organizations and in particular women, and thus provides a very useful network through which information on population and development issues can be disseminated.

Mr. Arzoumanian (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Apart from the use of educational institutions, Papua New Guinea has found that a radio communication network utilizing a multilingual medium has been a very effective and efficient channel for carrying out public-awareness programmes and activities related to population and development. Cultural theatre groups in Papua New Guinea whose performances have family-planning themes constitute yet another innovative manner for development agents to channel information, in a cost-effective manner, to the broadest possible spectrum of the population of the various isolated communities.

We support the continued UNFPA emphasis on maternal and child health as part of the larger components of population planning and development activities. Child-health issues remain a grave concern for Papua New Guinea and the Pacific region as a whole. The Papua New Guinea Government recently initiated a child-survival programme focused on the problems of nutrition and the health needs of children.

While international migration may not be a big problem for Papua New Guinea, internal migration, particularly from the rural to the urban areas, is causing a serious problem for the health and basic livelihood of ordinary citizens. Studies indicate that the urban population is growing much more rapidly than the average national population. It is estimated that by the year 2015 urban centres are likely to hold 20 to 30 per cent of the total population. It is grossly beyond the capacity of urban authorities and Governments to cater adequately to the basic needs of these communities.

The current international Programme of Action on population and development could have been strengthened to adequately reflect concerns relating to strategies for rural and regional development. Imbalances in rural urban development and regional disparities directly influence migrational patterns. To handle these growing issues more effectively at the national level, the Government of Papua New Guinea has established a National Population Council as a body for coordinating policies on population and development. This body provides the mechanism through which the Government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and churches are directly represented and can have input into decisions taken at the highest governmental level.

To improve coordination and set proper targets in various sectors and develop realistic programme components, the Government of Papua New Guinea is now endeavouring to link the work of the recently established Commission on Sustainable Development, the National Population Council, the National Women's Council and various policy-coordinating bodies to the overall supervision, management and direction of the high-level National Planning Council. The National Planning Council is a strategic resource-management decision-making tool established by the Cabinet to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the mobilization of resources and resource allocation towards attaining national priorities and objectives.

My delegation believes that with this operational decision-making structure in place, linking different sectors and participants, Papua New Guinea will be able to improve its capacity to take on additional responsibilities within the framework of international cooperation, with specific reference to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

I wish to re-emphasize that the direction of international development cooperation should be focused on improving the programme content of national strategies in order to reflect the realities of individual countries.

We urge that in the implementation of the Programme of Action, the international community to take into consideration the multicultural traditions and value systems of various regions and countries and their particular geographic and demographic diversities. In Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, we would like to highlight the youthful character of our population, the harsh terrain and the geographic isolation. We therefore give priority to the development of infrastructure, such as transport and communication, and we place emphasis on management and institutional capacity-building, information technology resources and the use of educational processes in human resource development as important project components that will determine our overall success in achieving our national development objectives.

We recognize the benefit of population stabilization, which can be achieved through the improvement of access to reproductive health care, lowering death rates and raising educational levels, and improving the status and the empowerment of women as an important factor in the success of population management and development.

Therefore, my delegation believes that the adoption of the Programme of Action before us is of great importance in balancing the needs of the growing global population and other sectoral development priorities, which is critical in achieving population stabilization, and hence ensuring long-term socio-economic and political stability within our respective countries .

In conclusion, we urge this body to give clear guidelines, without political prejudice on the implementation of the Programme of Action by the various agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. We have so far made positive progress in Cairo on the question of institutional arrangements.

In this regard, my delegation is following closely the current debate taking place on the mechanisms for implementation of the Programme of Action and the future executive board of the United Nations Population Fund.

My delegation considers that a collective and harmonious decision is required to establish an effective institutional arrangement.

This is indeed an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. Papua New Guinea looks forward to working in cooperation with the international community to meet the goals and aspirations we set in Cairo for the betterment of our respective citizens.

Mr. Seniloli (Fiji): I am pleased to address the Assembly today on a matter of great importance not only to my country but to the world as well. But first of all, I join other delegations in offering my congratulations to the Government and the people of Egypt for hosting a most successful conference. In both form and substance, the International Conference on Population and Development set standards of excellence which will be the yardstick against which future international meetings will be measured.

It also gives me much pleasure to extend the appreciation of my delegation to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference. Mrs. Sadik's involvement and exceptional leadership skills have become a hallmark of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Cairo Conference would have been significantly poorer without her dynamic input.

I also offer my delegation's congratulations to the UNFPA on its twenty-fifth anniversary. Fiji was honoured, along with other countries, to sponsor a resolution debated in this very Assembly only a few weeks ago applauding the UNFPA. The South Pacific headquarters of the UNFPA is located in the Fiji capital, Suva. A UNFPA Country Programme Technical Support Team for the Pacific is also located in Fiji. It is one of the eight Country Teams established by the UNFPA. I also take this opportunity to renew my Government's strong support for the valuable and untiring work of the UNFPA's regional office and to thank the organization for the provision of its technical support team.

Fiji was privileged to have participated in the Conference, where it was represented at the ministerial level. While we are, by any standards, a small country we are nevertheless pleased that we were able to respond to the invitation of the international community to deliberate on the key issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development.

One of the significant achievements of the Conference was that it reaffirmed the importance of women, women's reproductive rights, women's health and women's empowerment in the global agenda. It recognized that investment in women's health, education and empowerment is an essential component of social and economic development. The consensus on the Programme of Action was indeed the remarkable outcome of the Conference. Fiji is fully committed to achieving the goals and objectives contained in the Programme of Action. In this regard, however, we believe that, ultimately, a policy of greater self-reliance will produce the most enduring and constructive results at the national level.

Fiji accepts that a significant share of the responsibility for giving effect to the Programme will rest with national Governments. Roughly two thirds of the costs to implement the Programme of Action will be borne by the countries themselves. It is against this background that my delegation associates itself with other delegations that have urged the developed industrialized countries to demonstrate concrete evidence of their commitment to the Programme. Fiji also believes that non-governmental organizations could play a catalytic role in ensuring that the United Nations system remains faithful to the commitments that were made at the Conference. At the national level, Fiji will encourage the continued participation of non-governmental organizations and community-based groups towards the goals of Cairo. Governments can create favourable environments for helping to alleviate poverty, enhance employment and create sustainable and healthy populations. But increasingly, it is being realized that they cannot do everything. The private sector must also have a larger role in this coalition to activate the Programme of Action.

Small-island developing countries will need the combined partnership and support of the international community if they are to have a realistic chance of making the Programme a practical reality. In this connection, Fiji believes that paragraphs 16.18 to 16.20 of the Programme of Action will be critical in determining the medium- to long-term success of the Conference. Cairo was only the beginning of a long and holistic process. It was pivotal in that it gave explicit recognition to the need for new and additional financial resources. It would be a mistake, however, to think its achievements are already within our grasp. They will neither come soon nor easily. They will require considerable effort. There is also little doubt that the availability and early mobilization of financial resources will be a critical element underpinning the success of activities at the national level to breathe life into the Programme of Action.

In this connection, Fiji will closely observe, along with other Members of the United Nations, future efforts by the donor community to translate the goals of the Conference into reality. Fiji believes that international financial organizations and, in particular, the Bretton Woods institutions must necessarily play a strategic part in providing the enabling environment that could empower national Governments to assume greater responsibility for implementing the goals of the Programme of Action. The meeting of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development later this month will provide an excellent opportunity to confirm the readiness of the developed countries to make good on the pledges that were made in Cairo. Fiji would also urge those Governments that have subscribed to the Amsterdam Declaration on a Better Life for Future Generations, to renew their efforts to allocate greater resources to population programmes in order to meet the needs of the millions of people in developing countries in the field of population activities.

The Programme of Action will remain the blueprint for sustainable-development planning into the next century. For Fiji, as a small island developing country, there is much contained in the Programme that has linkages with what emanated from Rio and Barbados.

Copenhagen, Beijing and Ankara will also have a significant impact on the principles that underlie the consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development.

Increasing urban drift will have implications for urban population densities. Such processes will have ramifications for urban habitats and impose greater pressures on already fragile island ecosystems.

The social goals of the International Conference on Population and Development — education, health, universal access to reproductive health care and family planning — will promote social equality, because they take into consideration gender, geographical and socio-economic disparities. In this complex matrix, of which our understanding is far from complete, poverty, employment and social integration will be affected. We therefore think that it might be useful for appropriate institutions to be identified as focal points, at both the regional and international levels, to coordinate the sometimes bewildering number of processes that give rise to an ever increasing number of international strategies having as their ultimate aim the betterment of the human condition.

The time is now right to move forward. Fiji will closely follow the steps that are taken to give practical expression and impetus to the agenda agreed upon at the Conference. In this process, we share the views of those who contend that the Economic and Social Council must play an integral role in broadly monitoring and coordinating the modalities that would ensure timely delivery of the promises of Cairo. My delegation also supports the suggestion that the Assembly should organize a regular review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. It behoves each of us to be vigilant in this process. We intend to be an active participant in it. It is in our sustained vigilance that we might better guarantee that the Programme of Action will become meaningful.

At the subregional level Fiji will seek to engage its neighbours in an active dialogue to further explore ways in which the South Pacific Forum secretariat could be better positioned to respond to the challenges posed by the Programme of Action. We believe that, as an overarching subregional organization, the Forum could play a proactive role, particularly in capacity-building, the sharing and exchange of information and experience and the coordination of appropriate donor-donee responses. The South Pacific Commission, with its special mandate in the area of demography, will also be a key regional player.

We further believe that the United Nations Development Programme in particular, with its well recognized capacity for project formulation and delivery at the national level, could play a pivotal role in complementing and reinforcing the activities of regional institutions. In addition, the Pacific Operations Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which is headquartered in Port-Vila, Vanuatu, would be well placed to complement the activities of the Suva regional office of UNFPA, in coordination with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other actors within the United Nations system. We believe that greater intraregional cooperation between all these bodies will make for more efficient delivery and enhance the chances of early implementation of the Programme of Action at both the national and regional levels.

Let me conclude by stating the obvious. Without a concerted and sustained global partnership, the Programme of Action that was so deftly constructed at Cairo will have a poor chance of success. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that this innovation is given every encouragement to succeed. If there was ever any doubt about our interdependence, Cairo has reaffirmed loudly and clearly that international cooperation is crucial in ensuring sustainable development and lasting global peace and security. Let us now rededicate all our Governments to realizing the goals of the Conference.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Panama wishes to welcome before the General Assembly the achievements of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Government of Panama had an opportunity to do so at the closing meeting of the Cairo Conference, when, as Chairman of the regional Group, it spoke on behalf of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean. Now the delegation of Panama wishes to reaffirm its appreciation for the work done by the officials of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), both for the international assistance provided to our country and for the preparation and execution of the International Conference on Population and Development. The skills of Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, and of her team have, with the success of the Conference, become even more evident.

The commitments undertaken in the spirit of Cairo now depend on the will to implement them shown by all the parties called on to play a role in a field of unquestionably great interest and high priority for all Governments and societies.

Let us recall that the International Conference on Population and Development was convened explicitly to address population concerns as they relate to sustained economic growth, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, sexual equality and reproductive health. As the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization, the objective of the Conference was to forge

> "an international consensus on a 20-year plan of action that addresses population issues as an indispensable component of sustainable development", *(A/49/1, para 228)*

as defined at the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

In the view of the Secretary-General, the programme implications of the Conference pose important problems for the future. For it is clear that, like the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen, the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held in Istanbul — meetings with which the Cairo Conference shares many objectives — the Cairo Programme of Action will be a positive and dynamic force only if Governments, local communities, the non-governmental sector, the United Nations system and the international community demonstrate genuine determination to translate the recommendations of the Conference into positive measures.

Panama is a small country, in terms of territory and population, by comparison with neighbouring countries and other countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region. But destiny has determined that, because of our geographical location as a centre of global communications, we have a very well informed population and personalities and groups that are very attentive to population problems. Panama went to Cairo with a diagnosis on population that had been arrived at by governmental authorities and representatives of civilian society.

In harmony with the Cairo spirit, Panama will henceforth support all United Nations actions in respect of population and development that meet the following conditions: coherence with earlier programmes that have proved to be effective; the feasibility or possibility of achievement within the assigned financial resources; synergistic qualities that make it possible for organs and programmes to work together to ensure the attainment of the objectives; updating of strategy, enabling the Programme of Action approved in Cairo to be adapted continuously to the reality of the time and place of application; regional consensus that the measures and projects chosen for each region have the consent of Governments and of civilian societies in the respective regions; and moral justification for both the principles and the goals of projects shared by the peoples — projects that must have an appropriate relation to national and regional values and identities.

Governments and civilian society recognize the legitimacy of new strategies to deal with new problems whose solution requires global targets. These strategies and objectives lose legitimacy if they are not in keeping with the values and the innate importance of cultural identities.

Those are some of the factors that my delegation felt it would be appropriate to emphasize today.

The delegation of Panama is very aware of the fact that, because of the framework in which the Programme of Action has been placed, it is necessary to chart a course if it is to work.

My delegation believes that the wisest course is to work with the personnel and the mechanisms that have proved themselves. Which are they? Perhaps existing mechanisms, but improved and strengthened? Or perhaps new mechanisms with the cooperation of existing staff and structures? We need to find answers to these questions. Solving the problem is crucial to the Programme of Action. Political will and prudence, which usually produce the best results, will provide the best answer in this case.

The General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations must always bear in mind the fact that the Organization is working within the framework of a changing international environment, in which solutions are in urgent demand, and that conferences are being prepared and held whose mandates and results are closely related to the priorities and urgent needs of the contemporary world.

The delegation of Panama believes that the first stage of the Programme of Action should consist of the production of an integrated strategy to assess the impact of programmes that are under way and new national programmes inspired by the Cairo Conference. We believe also that what is needed is an approach that ensures wide dissemination of data related to population. At the national and regional levels in particular, information services should be geared to wide exchange and dissemination, between population specialists, of successful innovations with regard to methods and materials.

In a word, if the United Nations wants to ensure the success of the Programme of Action that was adopted by the Cairo Conference it must give priority to supporting and strengthening national and regional institutions, which, in Latin America, have proved to be exceptionally competent in the fields of demographics in particular and social sciences in general.

The delegation of Panama believes that if the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo is to be implemented, priorities among possible responses must be set. Here, we feel that the institutional problems posed by implementation must be solved in such a way as to preserve the existing United Nations relationships. My delegation believes that the Programme of Action must be carried forward with the participation of all sectors that have any familiarity or relation with its objectives and strategies, which, in accordance with the Cairo spirit — I repeat: in accordance with the Cairo spirit — are to make a contribution to satisfying human needs and fulfilling the individual human rights of every man, woman and child in the world.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): I should like to begin by thanking the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and her staff for their thorough preparations for the Conference. My delegation also expresses its sincere gratitude to the Egyptian Government and people for their hospitality and graciousness, which helped to ensure the success of the Conference.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to associate itself with the views expressed this morning by Ambassador Lamamra, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Group of 77. His excellent statement conveyed the basic positions of the Republic of Korea with regard to the population issue.

My delegation wholeheartedly welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. I believe that the 1994 Cairo Conference gave the international community a genuine opportunity for close cooperation in addressing this pressing global situation. Indeed, there were many notable and positive outcomes, which made the Conference a great success. In particular, my delegation welcomes the strong commitment and spirit of cooperation that prevailed during the deliberations and facilitated the discussion of otherwise sensitive and politically charged issues. We hope that the momentum that was demonstrated in Cairo will be accelerated and carried into the forthcoming international Conferences, including the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

My delegation shares the view that one of the most positive outcomes of the Conference was the overwhelming recognition that the empowerment of women was a critical factor in dealing with the population issue. Endowing women with educational and political opportunities, as well as legal and institutional support structures, will lead to their improved economic, social and political status, which in turn will allow them to play a more prominent role in population issues.

Another strong aspect of the Programme of Action is the section dealing with family planning and reproductive rights and health services. Conveying the necessary information to the general population is not an easy task, and simply cannot be fulfilled at the national level alone. Grass-roots participation should therefore be an integral part of the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. It is a primary responsibility of the Government to encourage local leaders and other key actors at the grass-roots level in many villages to communicate the importance of family planning and reproductive health services.

For the past three decades, the Government of the Republic of Korea has made efforts to continuously draw attention to the population issue through the media and public information campaigns. My country also instituted a population programme similar to the one described by Ambassador Wisnumurti of Indonesia, in which emphasis was placed on creating small and prosperous families. My country's experience has shown that family planning and the provision of health services are driving forces behind positive changes in population dynamics. It has been clearly proved that these kinds of population measures bring about increased economic growth and social development, which are in themselves factors for population stabilization.

The immediate challenge facing us now is the implementation of the Programme of Action. While the objectives and targets set out in the Programme of Action are practical and feasible, even the most constructive plans must be supported by adequate financial resources and the political will of countries.

The implementation of the Programme of Action can be realized only through international cooperation. It is encouraging to hear that the developed-country parties and relevant international organizations have announced their commitment and plans to increase external financial resources in assisting developing countries. We commend the various actors, including Member States, non-governmental organizations and individuals, that have already begun to work to implement the commitments they made at the Conference.

The relevant bodies of the United Nations should play a central role in the implementation of the Programme of Action. In this regard, it is crucial to strengthen and coordinate the work of the UNFPA, the Population Division of the Secretariat and the Population Commission in order to conduct effective follow-up activities.

With regard to exchanges on experience, technical know-how and ideas on family planning programmes among developing countries, I am pleased to inform members that my Government and UNFPA are co-sponsoring a population symposium to be held from 21 to 24 November 1994 in Seoul. The symposium will focus on population issues relating to gender preferences for children in South and East Asia, resulting in the rise of female infanticide and an imbalance in the ratio between male and female populations. This seminar will be attended by a number of Asian countries for the purpose of sharing relevant experience and collectively seeking workable solutions.

The Republic of Korea has attached great significance to population issues throughout its entire development process and has felt that the population issue always stood at the core of its development strategy. We fully subscribe to the belief that in order for development to be successful and sustainable, population issues must be considered as an integral part of any national development strategy.

Mr. Woroniecki (Poland): Let me first thank Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development for her very active role in the preparation process of the Conference, as well as during the Conference itself. We are convinced that Mrs. Sadik will also continue to provide adequate leadership in the follow-up to the Conference.

I should also like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Egypt, which created excellent conditions for that giant gathering. Our thanks also go to the Secretariat for the comprehensive report in document A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1.

The Cairo Conference has successfully brought to light the multifaceted interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and advances in the education, economic status and empowerment of women. The Conference has followed and built upon other important events, such as the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

At the same time, the outcome of the Conference in Cairo may be expected to exert an impact on other major Conferences in 1995 and 1996, such as the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

The Programme of Action approved by the Cairo Conference reflects the broad consensus that worked out the common ground in the sphere of population and development. Such a need had developed since the World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1974 and the International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984, to which many of the preceding speakers have alluded.

Of crucial importance is the awareness expressed during the Conference that the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action is the sovereign right of each country. Of similar importance is also the commitment to observe universally recognized human rights.

The results of the Conference will depend to a great extent on concrete action that should be initiated as a result of the Programme of Action. The Programme encompasses activities at the international as well as the national level. The process therefore implies the involvement not only of Governments and the international community but also of local communities, the non-governmental sector and all other concerned organizations and individuals.

It is possible that no single group in the Conference process has had as profound an impact as the non-governmental sector. Thousands of representatives of non-governmental organizations contributed their experience and their commitment to the goals of the Conference. We should look at practical ways of further expanding the participation of non-governmental organizations, in particular in UNFPA-financed activities.

We strongly believe that inter-agency and intersectoral cooperation and collaboration must also be strengthened in the field of population. We duly appreciate the role played by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Division, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Development Fund for women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Bank and the regional development banks and the United Nations regional commissions. We would be grateful for their further involvement in the follow-up process to the 1994 Cairo Conference.

According to the Programme of Action, two thirds of the costs will continue to be met by the countries themselves. The remaining third is to be generated by the international community. This implies the need for additional resources to support programmes addressing population and development goals. International assistance should be concentrated on countries with the greatest gaps between the goals of the International Conference for the year 2015 and their present situation.

The current decade has witnessed an unprecedented dynamic rate of population growth, which makes it imperative for us to take concrete action relating to the rate of this growth, both worldwide and in individual regions of the world. In many cases people are suffering from shortages of food and water, a housing deficit, unemployment and a lack of adequate medical services. Migration continues in large numbers, both internally and across borders. The natural environment is becoming seriously threatened. The international community cannot remain indifferent to these phenomena.

Poland, a country in transition, has to face social and economic consequences arising from the ongoing systemic reform. The country's economic hardships affect social and demographic processes, as seen in the growing unemployment and difficulties of access to medical services. The unsatisfactory condition of health in our society is a great social and demographic problem for Poland, given the high mortality and sickness rates. The main threats to human health in Poland are circulatory diseases, cancer, injuries and poisonings, which together account for 80 per cent of deaths. The infant mortality rate is still high, despite its recent fall. Life expectancy, especially among males, is growing shorter as a result of the worsening conditions of health and high mortality rates. It is presumed that a failure to solve the problem of unemployment — 17 per cent of the total workforce right now — may increase emigration pressures.

The Polish Government expresses its satisfaction that the crucial recommendations of the European Population Conference, held in Geneva in March 1993, are contained in the Cairo Programme of Action. In our view, Special Recommendation 49 of the European Conference deserves special attention. It calls for the elaboration and implementation of a coordinated strategy to assist countries in transition in the field of reproductive health, including family planning. This also concerns assistance in the implementation of reforms in health systems and the field of migration.

We believe that the activity and dynamism demonstrated in the preparations for the Cairo Conference and at the Conference itself will continue. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should fulfil their respective responsibilities in providing system-wide coordination and guidance in the monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action and in making recommendations in this regard. The creation of a more coherent reporting system, taking into account the reporting procedures that are required in follow-up to other international conferences, should also be taken into consideration.

Compared with any earlier document on population and development, this Programme of Action is detailed in its analysis, specific in its objectives, precise in its recommendations and transparent in its methodology. We should be thankful to the United Nations system as a whole and to the United Nations Population Fund in particular for their readiness to provide all the advice and assistance we need. We shall do our best to ensure that the agreements made in Cairo become reality. This challenge can be met on the condition that there is human solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance of differences.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

United Nations

A/49/PV.60

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

60th Meeting
Friday, 18 November 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy .... (Côte d'Ivoire)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Statements on the occasion of the fifth Africa Industrialization Day

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to read out a statement that the President of the General Assembly, who is absent today owing to unavoidable commitments, has requested that I deliver on his behalf on the occasion of the fifth Africa Industrialization Day. It reads as follows:

> "On 20 November countries throughout the continent of Africa and in various capitals of the world will commemorate Africa Industrialization Day. This year marks the fifth celebration of the Day since its proclamation at the Conference of African Ministers of Industry at Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1989 and its endorsement by the General Assembly.
>
> "We are all well aware that Africa's industrial progress has fallen behind those of other developing regions. Whereas industry in Asia and Latin America has, on the whole, shown great strides, Africa has not kept pace and, in some instances, has even lost ground, and there is even a tendency to equate Africa with poverty, hunger, disease and civil strife.
>
> "Nevertheless, Africa is in fact rich in both natural and human resources. Industrialization will make it possible for African countries to transform those resources into material goods with a higher economic value. It will enable them to realize the full potential of their abundant resources and propel them to economic prosperity. Indeed, industrialization holds the key to addressing the major concerns of the African continent.
>
> "It is generally recognized that industry is the engine of economic growth and development. It provides the essential inputs for other sectors of the economy and produces the end products to satisfy consumer needs. It creates productive employment, promotes rural development, sustains agriculture and makes health care more widely available. In short, industry is the key to both economic progress and social development in Africa.
>
> "The theme of this year's Africa Industrialization Day — private-sector development — is particularly appropriate in light of current economic changes. Industry is clearly moving from the public to the private domain, not only in the countries in transition but throughout most parts of the developing world, including Africa.
>
> "The economic lessons of more than two decades of development have shown us that for industry to thrive and grow the competitiveness,

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innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector must be given the opportunity to flourish. We in Africa should take heed of this lesson and lend support to our industrialists and entrepreneurs. Above all, Governments throughout the continent can help by creating an environment conducive to sustainable industrial development. This is the message I wish to impart on the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day.

"While Africa must bear the primary responsibility for its own industrialization, the international community must do its part in supporting and sustaining that process. Indeed, it is in the interest of the international community to do so. An industrializing Africa will benefit its trading partners as new markets for their exports open up and as the increasing prosperity of Africans enables them to purchase goods from abroad. Through debt reduction, improved market access, technology transfer, increased investments and official development assistance, Africa can do even more to attain self-sustaining industrialization and economic growth. This will bring not only a better life to more than 700 million Africans but will enable Africa to make a positive contribution to international economic cooperation.

"The central task of the United Nations system is to galvanize international action in support of Africa's efforts to attain economic prosperity and social stability. Among the organizations of the United Nations system, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has played a leading role in fostering international economic cooperation for African industrialization. Together with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, UNIDO has brought heightened awareness of the pressing industrial needs of the continent and has provided its expertise in policy and technical matters in support of African industrialization.

"In the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Uruguay Round agreements, Africa will need to undertake a major reorientation of its industrial strategies and programmes. Countries in the continent need to strengthen their agro-industrial sector and move towards increased processing of raw materials and exports of manufactured goods. That is why it is more necessary and urgent than ever to create an instrument for financing pre-feasibility studies for the diversification of African agricultural raw materials, in the framework of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. It is clear that diversification of African raw materials will contribute to broadening the industrial base that is indispensable for the sustained growth of the manufacturing sector in African countries.

"International competitiveness and enhanced export capability must be a key objective for African enterprises in those industrial subsectors where specific countries have a comparative advantage. Through its accumulated experience and expertise, UNIDO can play a major role in facilitating this major transformation in African economies.

"Africa Industrialization Day holds more than symbolic significance for those of us in Africa. It underscores our firm resolve to rise above our current difficulties and forge ahead with renewed confidence. It is a day when we rededicate ourselves to rebuilding our industries and returning our continent to the path of sustained economic recovery and development. I have every confidence that, with the collective support of the international community, the dream of African industrialization will soon become a reality".

I call next on the representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosario Green, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who will read out a message from the Secretary-General.

Ms. Green: (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs) It is my pleasure this morning to read out the following message from the Secretary-General:

"The twentieth of November is Africa Industrialization Day. It is the day when Africa celebrates its achievements in the field of industry and commits itself to industrialization as part of its development goals. I am pleased to join in the celebration of these goals and achievements.

"I would especially like to underline the importance of the Day for the United Nations system as a whole.

"African development is perhaps the single greatest challenge facing the international community. Increasingly, the world community is beginning to recognize the vital need to support Africa's efforts for stability, social progress and the eradication of hunger and disease.

"Industry has an essential role in economic and social development. Industrial growth will be a key component of progress in Africa. The needs are there in abundance, but so are the natural and human resources. What is required of us is the full commitment of all the development partners to greater and special efforts.

"The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s provides the framework within which the United Nations system will support economic and social progress in Africa in the years to come. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Economic Commission for Africa and other parts of the United Nations system, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, are committed to working closely together to advance the objectives of the Programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to assure African countries of my full support for their efforts in industrialization and of my determination that the United Nations system shall give of its best in providing support to them.

"The mobilization of the United Nations system in support of development has been a special priority for me as Secretary-General. The preparation of Country Strategy Notes is an important part of this effort. Through this process, the United Nations system mobilizes its efforts in support of country priorities — as determined by the country itself. Let me assure the Assembly that the needs of industrial development will be taken fully into account in this process.

"The theme of this year's Africa Industrialization Day is the private sector. It is a particularly appropriate theme because it is the private sector that will have the principal role to play in generating successful industrial growth, as the example of other parts of the world shows us. Because the industrial sector in Africa is small at present, this will be a demanding role. Foreign investment can help, and must be encouraged. The right industrial policies and support institutions are essential, and African Governments are taking many of the steps needed. However, it is the African industrialists, large and small, who will face the greatest challenge and who need all our support.

"Let us wish them well. Together, let us encourage the international community to give them the support they need and deserve in confronting the challenges that lie ahead".

Agenda item 112 ***(continued)***

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/49/400/Add.6)

The President (*interpretation from French*): In a letter contained in document A/49/400/Add.6, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 20 and 26 September, 5 and 14 October and 3 and 9 November 1994, the Gambia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158 ***(continued)***

Report of the International Conference on Population and Development: report of the Conference (A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1)

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): The approval of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development by consensus was an important achievement. The Cairo Conference firmly established the link between population and sustainable development. It also made it very clear that the empowerment of women was absolutely essential for a successful population programme.

The Conference further spelt out the role and necessity of international cooperation in addition to the actions required at the national level. The need to work in partnership with the non-governmental organizations and the private sector was also emphasized. The Programme of Action is a comprehensive package aimed at achieving a delicate balance between population and development.

For all this to happen, proper planning, full commitment and a clear sense of purpose were required. This achievement would not have been possible but for the conviction, courage and determination of the people of the host country — the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The timely and successful holding of the Conference was also made possible by the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, who provided strong leadership. The Conference would have been lost had not all the participants — Member States, observer States and others — shown the understanding and support that the Conference rightly deserved.

The Cairo Conference, in the view of my delegation, was not just another meeting for the benefit of a few. If implemented fully within the stipulated time frame, the Programme of Action approved by the Conference has the capacity to transform the lives of billions. Mrs. Sadik, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is therefore quite right in stating that the Programme of Action has the potential to change the world.

My delegation believes that any programme that has a capacity to change the world, and for the better, deserves serious attention and full support. Lack of implementation of this Programme would be bound to adversely affect the entire world. The Programme, as agreed, puts the major burden on the developing countries. It expects domestic resource mobilization to cover two thirds of the costs of implementing the Programme, which will run into the billions of dollars. The Programme seeks the other third of the cost from external sources. Clearly, there is a need for new and additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action for population and development activities.

Given the political will, the international community can shoulder this responsibility at a lesser cost now. However, the burden on the developing countries, particularly on the least developed, would be enormous. Fully cognizant of the additional hardships to come, we are ready to do our best to implement the Programme of Action in cooperation with the international community.

The importance of institutional follow-up to the Conference cannot be overemphasized. National, subregional and regional activities have been outlined, but the international responsibility, particularly the role and support of the United Nations system in the successful implementation of the Programme, is equally important. It is incumbent on the General Assembly and on the Economic and Social Council to carry out an in-depth assessment of the roles, responsibilities, mandates and comparative advantages of the intergovernmental bodies and organs of the United Nations in addressing population and development issues.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We must make the best use of the United Nations expertise and resources without jeopardizing the objectives and the actions set out in the Programme of Action. This obviously requires strengthening the population-related organs of the United Nations, and particularly the elaboration of the concept of a separate executive board for the UNFPA. This new institutional arrangement should have only one purpose: effective support for the timely implementation of the Programme of Action. However, its successful implementation depends on the full and unqualified support of all actors. The stakes are very high for each one of us.

Mr. Rowe (Australia): A key objective of Australia at the International Conference on Population and Development was to work for international consensus on a Programme of Action that was strong and forward-looking and that would guide population and development programmes into the twenty-first century.

The Cairo Conference achieved unprecedented international agreement on the central development issues of sustainable development, human rights and the promotion of individual choice. Cairo recognized that enabling women to determine their goals in life and to make their own choices is essential to sustainable development and to slowing population growth. The success of population policies depends in large measure on gender equality, the equitable participation of women in decision-making, and education, especially for women and girls. Australia is very pleased that the Programme of Action is particularly strong on all these counts.

The Programme of Action enshrines the principles of freedom of choice and non-coercion in family planning programmes, but takes a strong position on making available the means to exercise that choice. This approach is consistent with Australia's development assistance programmes. In accord with the goals contained in the Programme of Action, Australia has also put in place new guidelines which seek to ensure that coercion does not occur in population programmes funded through its Development Cooperation Programme.

The Cairo Conference achieved much; our task now is to transform the words into reality. With the Conference over, there is a need to ensure that the momentum of the reform process is not lost.

Australia will be working hard to ensure that the commitments made at Cairo are followed through in Copenhagen and Beijing. We also look to the Economic and Social Council to fulfil its role in the coordination of the follow-up process among the relevant United Nations agencies, and we call for active field-level support by Resident Coordinators for the measures taken by United Nations agencies to assist countries in implementing the Conference's Programme of Action. We also look to the active involvement of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other agencies in implementing the Programme of Action. On the question of a separate executive board for UNFPA, we note that this issue has not so far inhibited a high profile for population and development concerns. We therefore suggest that further consideration be given to this matter at a later date.

The Cairo documents address the central problem facing all humanity: to balance population, development and natural resources, while promoting choice and human rights. They establish the principles on the basis of which we can attack that problem, individually and together.

The Programme of Action recognizes that significant additional resources will be required to translate the goals of Cairo into reality. The Australian Government has taken steps to meet that objective. Australia has already trebled funding for population and development activities. These programmes emphasize the provision of high quality voluntary reproductive health services which are integrated with programmes focusing on women's empowerment, their health and education. In addition, earlier this year the Australian Government announced a substantial new four-year health initiative which doubles spending in this sector.

All Member States are, of course, committed to assessing and reporting on their progress in implementing the Programme of Action. This is a commitment which Australia is taking very seriously. A detailed examination of the Programme of Action has been initiated by the Government. The review is aimed at providing an overview of Australia's position in relation to the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. With regard to our domestic situation, Australia meets standards at a national level but needs to continue to address the needs of particular groups, such as indigenous peoples, people in rural and remote areas and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

The centrality of international migration issues for the international community was reflected in the intense discussions at Cairo on family reunion. This is an issue which went beyond economic or political groupings, reflecting the far-reaching nature of people movements. The migratory landscape over the last few decades has changed dramatically, with most traditional sending countries now also being receiving ones. Greater economic linkages, economic graduations and political or natural events will maintain pressure on the unprecedented level of movement of people around the globe.

Australia strongly supports the concept of family migration and has already reflected this concept in its national legislation. Such migration represented well over half Australia's migrant intake in 1993 to 1994. Australia will also continue to play a strong role in the resettlement of refugees.

Accordingly, Australia welcomes the proposal that an international conference on migration be convened by the United Nations. The conference will need to be carefully planned to ensure that it approaches international migration issues in a way that does not overlap with the important work of other international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Australia will be ready to play its part in that process.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: As we approve the report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Argentina is in effect repeating the statement it made during consideration of the Programme of Action in Cairo, which can be found in document A/CONF.171/13.

We welcome endorsement of the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo on 13 September 1994 and congratulate Mrs. Sadik and her colleagues on their efforts in the preparation of the Programme. We also congratulate the Government of Egypt on its excellent arrangements and the support it gave to the Conference.

We fully support the statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77, who spoke of the general approach of the Programme of Action, and therefore we will not refer to the contents of the various chapters. We believe that on this occasion we should concentrate on the items left open in Cairo: follow-up machinery for the Programme of Action — Chapter XVI — and several policy items dealing with international migration. In both cases, the Group of 77 will present proposals which we hope can be discussed in the coming days.

Nevertheless, allow we to state what we think should be the main policy guidelines for institutional machinery. We believe there are four levels at which the analysis should be made: first, the General Assembly, where policies should be decided; secondly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), where programmes of competent bodies in the system should be coordinated; thirdly, a functional commission of ECOSOC on population and development with a mandate in keeping with the inter-sectoral nature of the Programme of Action and capable of follow-up policy-making on the Programme; and, fourthly, an executive board of the United Nations Population Fund capable of providing operational follow-up to the Programme.

To have a clear idea of the institutional follow-up machinery and how the four levels will interact requires a report from the Secretary-General detailing budgetary implications and including information about the necessary logistical support from the Secretariat. We hope to be able to take a final decision on this matter, on the basis of this report, towards the middle of next year.

With regard to international migration, chapter X contains important policy recommendations which we support. Nevertheless, this item of the multilateral agenda has still not been sufficiently discussed in all its dimensions. Argentina believes that the United Nations must include international migration and development as a specific item on its multilateral agenda, to answer the many questions posed in Cairo which have not yet been resolved. The United Nations system is the right framework for this task. In addition, we support what the representative of Australia said about convening a conference on this subject. Argentina is sympathetic to this initiative and is prepared to take part in the process.

In conclusion, we wish simply to repeat that Argentina is committed to the implementation of the recommendations in the Programme of Action at all levels, particularly the regional level.

Mr. Güven (Turkey): The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, constitutes a crucial milestone in the global thinking on population issues. We all agree that improving the quality of life in a sustainable manner is our common and major goal. However, this requires integrated policies on population, development and environmental issues. Population policies, though an essential element of sustainable development, are not sufficient on their own if they are not implemented through effective programmes. These programmes, on the other hand, can be successful only when they stem from a synthesis of a multisectoral approach and are shaped to address the needs of society. These considerations are duly emphasized in the Programme of Action adopted by the Cairo Conference. Turkey, which has long experience in development planning, has recognized sustained economic growth and population factors to be integral parts of its development policy and programme efforts.

The measures and programmes we adopt with the aim of affecting and changing population variables — such as the size, growth, distribution and quality of population — in accordance with the needs of societies are essential components of population policies. They in turn constitute an integral part of social-development policies. Therefore, the interlinkage and interaction between these factors are fundamental elements to be taken into account in developing social and economic policies.

At the national level, Governments, in cooperation with, and through the active involvement of, parliamentarians, local authorities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and women's groups, should work to increase awareness of population and development issues by giving the utmost emphasis to elementary education, gender equality and development of human resources. At the international level we have to concert our action and cooperate with each other in order to achieve our common goals expeditiously.

We believe that the Cairo Conference has fulfilled its main objective. The Programme of Action will have more value if it is implemented in all countries. Nations will implement it in accordance with their religious and moral values, aiming, however, at the objectives formulated therein. The contents of this document are valuable, and Turkey commits itself to its full implementation.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Egypt, which perfectly organized this historic Conference of such magnitude.

Turkey, which will host the Habitat II Conference in 1996, will benefit from the experience gained by the Government of Egypt and do its utmost to ensure the success of Habitat II, which is destined to be a major step forward in the implementation of decisions taken at the Earth Summit in Rio. Also taken into consideration will be the relevant provisions of the Cairo Programme of Action and the outcome of other Conferences and meetings which will take place in the meantime as a follow-up to Rio.

Mr. Junejo (Pakistan): Today we stand with great hope and expectation at the threshold of a new century. Mankind has made some significant achievements over the past few decades. Technological advancement and geopolitical changes hold the promise of a future in which the aspirations of the human race to a peaceful and secure existence are realized. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference and Development at Cairo provides a framework for the implementation of national population and development strategies that would contribute towards the betterment of the human individual.

Addressing the Conference, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto pointed out that

> "the choices we make today will affect the future of mankind." (*A/CONF.171/13/Add.1, annex II, p. 27*)

We gathered in Cairo to take decisions that will leave our imprint on history. We made a commitment to work for the betterment of the human individual and, through the individual, the security of the nation-State. Strategies, policies and plans that do not advance the cause of human dignity have little chance of success. At Cairo we placed the human being at the centre of our decisions. The Programme of Action is therefore bound to have a direct impact on the lives of millions.

My delegation would like to thank His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak and the Government and the people of Egypt for their gracious hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Conference. We would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the success of the Cairo Conference. I would add that without Mrs. Nafis Sadik's personal involvement and the efficient work of her small secretariat the Conference may not have been able to achieve its landmark results.

Political commitment at the highest level is required for finding solutions to our concerns about the growing world population. Pakistan is committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's participation in the high-level debate of the Conference, despite all the internal and external pressures, underscored this fact. It was clear evidence of her personal commitment to arresting our high rate of population growth.

At the global level, at no other time in history has the question of a fast-growing world population gained such significance as it has today. The matter has acquired alarming proportions. The ability of countries and policy makers to deal with the multiplying demands of their expanding populations entails some fundamental questions and requires some serious thinking that can be translated into action-oriented strategies. Cairo provided us an opportunity to put together our collective energies and individual experiences to formulate policies at the international level. This would strengthen our efforts at the national level to deal with issues of population and development. Prime Minister Bhutto has stressed that it is imperative that, in the field of population control, global strategies and national plans work in unison.

The success of Cairo is the success story of not just an international conference: it reflects a genuine commitment by the international community to lay aside all differences of opinion. At Cairo we arrived at a consensus on actions that can be carried out in all the countries of the world. The implementation of the entire Programme of Action must, however, be guided by the chapeau of chapter II, "Principles". The chapeau underscores that the implementation of the recommendations in the Programme of Action is the sovereign right of each country and that such implementation should be in accordance with the religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people. Any document that does not take into account the culture and religious and cultural sensitivities of the target population cannot be effective.

Technological advancement and financial stability have allowed a handful of developed countries to assure security to the individual. We in the developing world are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the demands of the individual and society. History has shown that as nations develop there is a concomitant decrease in their rates of population growth. This has been the pattern in most developed countries. Development is a critical prerequisite for serious population-control strategies. Development is achievable only if it is accompanied by sustained economic growth.

The development process cannot gather momentum if the global economy lacks dynamism and stability and is beset with uncertainties. Neither will it gather momentum if the developing countries are weighted down by external indebtedness, if development finance is inadequate, if barriers restrict access to markets and if commodity prices and terms of trade remain depressed. Policies and measures needed to create an international environment that is strongly supportive of national development efforts are vital. Such development efforts that focus on enhanced health care and education, the empowerment of women and the generation of employment would be the best guarantee of population control.

The post-cold-war period cannot sustain the former patterns of inter-State relations. This new era is characterized by mutual dependency. The need for a new partnership was reiterated at Cairo, and this partnership is based on the principle of mutual benefits.

To tackle the multiple concerns of population growth, the increasing civil strife in some parts of the world, which is tearing down the structures of society, the scourge of disease and trans-border migration, which is leading to xenophobia, the developed countries need the assistance of the developing world. We are ready for this partnership, which would allow for the creation of a healthier and happier world.

I come from a region in which more than 30 per cent of the world's poorest live. They may be poor, but they are the most ingenious and hard-working people, who, when provided with the opportunity, always excel. We are committed to creating the appropriate opportunities for our people. It is critical that in this era of partnership the developed countries join hands with us in South Asia and help us to ensure that our people are uplifted economically.

Societies that have recognized and accepted women as equals have moved swiftly on the path to development. Women's empowerment and equality of status are critical to the success of policies — especially those that relate to population control. In its chapter on the empowerment of women, the Programme of Action represents some important strides. This chapter proposes action in some critical areas — action that would contribute towards the full participation of women in all spheres of life.

We are convinced that the traditional family is the bedrock of our society. Arguing strongly in favour of the family as the basic unit on which any society rests, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto pointed out that the disintegration of the traditional family has contributed to moral decay. We support all recommendations in the Programme of Action that call for strengthening of the family unit.

With regard to the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action, my delegation stresses the importance of adhering to the recommendations in Chapter XVI — especially paragraphs 16.25 through 16.27. These paragraphs recommend that the General Assembly, at its forty-ninth session, consider the question of a separate executive board for the United Nations Population Fund and that the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session in 1995, review the respective roles of the bodies within the United Nations system that deal with population and development issues. Only after a review of the roles of these bodies will it be possible to identify the appropriate follow-up mechanism. This agreement must be fully implemented. If the General Assembly is unable to consider the need for a separate executive board this year, the matter should be taken up by the Economic and Social Council next year.

I sincerely hope that the commitments made at this Conference will be fully implemented so that the integration of population policies and development efforts may be secured. We are determined to ensure that the implementation of these decisions will lead to the uplifting of the individual.

Mr. Allarey (Philippines): I should like to begin by paying tribute to the Government and the people of Egypt for their success in hosting the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo last September. Our thanks and appreciation go also to Mrs. Nafis Sadik for her commendable leadership and for the skilful manner in which she discharged her duties as Secretary-General of the Conference.

The Philippines took an active part in the Conference. Thus, we are committed to the objectives of its Programme of Action. These objectives are closely aligned with the goals of our country's medium-term development plan. The attainment of the status of a newly industrialized country envisaged by President Fidel

V. Ramos's "Philippines 2000" is anchored in a three-pronged strategy: human resource development, international competitiveness and macroeconomic stability. These three goals have a common denominator — the population factor.

Our concept of development recognizes that sustained development depends not only on Government action but also on initiatives of individuals, families and communities, as well as cooperatives and non-governmental organizations. Therefore the key to national development is people empowerment. This is based on the development philosophy that it is ultimately the individual, within the context of his family and community, who constitutes both the basis and the goal of economic growth and sustainable development. If policy making is to be made responsive and relevant to the realities of daily life, Governments must take into account the collective aspirations, choices and decisions of individuals and families.

The Philippine Constitution recognizes the family as the foundation of the Filipino nation. It is the task of government to strengthen the solidarity of the family and to promote its total development. The family serves as a focal point for analysis of what people need and how they use available resources and for the mobilization of the energy of people towards progress and development.

Women comprise half of the Philippine population. They are inevitably involved in the phenomenon of rapid population growth. The effects of this growth on the more than 30 million Filipino women are manifested in the feminization of poverty, the marginalization of female urban workers, the exploitation of overseas women workers, maternal depletion and, in general, women's subjugation to social inequities such as inferior education, low-paying jobs and discriminatory hiring and promotion policies. All these conditions are related to the phenomenon of violence against women. Any national development framework should recognize the centrality of women in the economic and social development process, in the bearing and rearing of children and in employment that includes not only domestic work but also productive economic activity, such as sustenance agriculture, wage-paying jobs and trading. Such a framework should guide the harnessing of half of the country's human resources — women — and should ensure their impact on national development goals.

The increasing participation of women in the workplace has not been accompanied by a convergence in earnings between Filipino males and Filipino females. This is indicative of discriminatory practices. An example of these is to be found in the fact that the edge that women have over men in levels of higher education has not been translated into employment opportunities.

Women should be able to contribute to development without sacrificing their dignity. Today's family could serve as a major paradigm of protest against the typecasting of women as having a role subordinate to that of men, who are privileged — wittingly or unwittingly — by their resistance to sharing household tasks and child care. The empowerment of women should include the resolution of conflicts between their reproductive and their economically productive roles, the sharing by men in the maintenance of the household and male participation in the redefinition of gender relations. All these things affect the true meaning of development itself.

Improving the status of women could reduce this conflict and lessen the concomitant burden passed on to women, through the equal sharing of responsibilities in parenthood and household activities between men and women and through equal opportunities for productive employment.

Migration patterns are a collective expression of many individual and family decisions in response to socio-economic changes and imbalances that affect their needs and aspirations. Socio-economic inequities and population growth fuel both internal and international migration. However, benefits derived from overseas remittances which are largely utilized for consumption rather than investment purposes can perpetuate dependence on other economies. This could inhibit the self-sustaining and self-reliant growth of local and national economies.

My Government has responded to issues of welfare and protection for the growing numbers of Filipino migrant workers. This concern has assumed much importance in the programmes of related Government agencies in view of the realization that the economic contribution of overseas remittances by Filipino migrant workers — estimated to be 4 per cent of gross national product — will have to be balanced against the social effects of temporary separation of family members.

The Philippine Foreign Secretary, Roberto Romulo, in his statement to the General Assembly on 5 October last, called for a United Nations global conference on migration. The call was based on the great interest shown during the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in such a conference. Together with some equally interested and concerned delegations from Africa and Latin America, my delegation is presenting to the Second Committee, through the Group of 77 and China, a draft resolution stressing the importance of international migration under the auspices of the United Nations.

Government is engaged in activities from which non-governmental organizations are relatively detached in administering programme activities aligned with overall population and development goals. A stronger partnership between my Government and non-governmental organizations has been forged to achieve the goals and objectives spelled out in the Programme of Action. Towards this end, it is important that Government should continue to collaborate with and enhance the potential of non-governmental organizations in strengthening grass-roots networks and community participative strategies.

My Government subscribes to the principle that health is a fundamental human right. Indeed, our Constitution, the basic law of our country, recognizes the sanctity of human life. In various forums, we have categorically stated that our laws reject abortion as a method of family planning. We also have safeguards against coercion. We have, instead, made available a full range of information and services on all legally permissible and medically acceptable family-planning methods in order that couples should have options for the exercise of their freedom of choice. There is universal access to these services to enable us to lower significantly the incidence of illegal and unsafe abortions.

There are also other considerations that for us rank high in the implementation of the Programme of Action. They are, *inter alia*, respect for religious and ethical values, cultural mores, norms and beliefs; participative and consultative approaches; and the couple's freedom and autonomy. We have intensified the formation of public and private service delivery outlets focusing on information, education and communication efforts, and the training of service providers in the technical and management aspects of their work, as well as monitoring and research activities. We are improving the public acceptance of the Philippine Family Planning Programme, which includes information, education and communication materials featuring health benefits and explaining the risks associated with unplanned pregnancies. These messages are uniformly being disseminated at the information and counselling level with the assistance of various advocacy groups.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development is the product of countless hours of study, deliberation and negotiation. It contains elements such as the environment, health, gender equality, education, migration, technology and research. In short, the Programme of Action is a framework that could be the basis for policy formulation, and its successful implementation could improve the quality of our lives. All the Conference's Programme of Action needs now is the political will to enhance the individual's choices and opportunities.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic):* At the outset, I have the pleasure of extending my delegation's thanks to the Arab Republic of Egypt, for the efforts that led to the success of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I should like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), led by Mrs. Nafis Sadik, for the valuable support the Fund continues to extend to population-related activities and for the effective role the Fund performed in ensuring the Conference's success.

The varying levels of development and living standards between various countries, persistent poverty and the aggravation of that phenomenon in certain regions, the acceleration of internal migratory movement of populations, the scarcity of natural resources, the aggravation of the problem of pollution and the overall fragility of the ecosystem are phenomena that create major and urgent challenges which we must address. To do that, we have to engage in dialogue, consultation and exchange of views, as the issues involved have to do with the current situation and the very future of our world and impact on humanity's aspirations after democracy, stability and prosperity for all.

Proceeding from this, Tunisia, which accords to population policy a high priority and puts it at the forefront of the means whereby it may achieve its objectives and implement its development plans, welcomes the positive results achieved at the Cairo Conference. In that Conference, there was broad consensus on the importance of those issues, on their close relationship with population problems and on the need to integrate them into developmental action as essential elements in the formulation of economic and social policies and programmes.

In this respect, I should like to refer to Tunisia's experience in the field of population and the effect this has had on comprehensive sustainable development in relation to various sectors which constitute the basic underpinning of the equilibrium and cohesion of the family and of society. Women and children are given a high priority in this integrated policy. Thanks to the measures it has taken, Tunisia has achieved positive results in the area of population. Indeed, that rate of demographic growth fell from 3 per cent in the 1960s to a current low of under 2 per cent. To be sure, none of these results could have been achieved were it not for the efforts deployed by Tunisia in such areas as health, social security coverage and education, particularly that of girls.

Family planning had a role to play in the achievement of such results. Educational campaigns have heightened public awareness of the importance of family planning in ensuring the integrity and balance of the family, especially when family planning was integrated into health-care services. However Tunisia's population concerns have not been limited to the reduction of the rate of demographic growth, but have embraced such qualitative questions as the country's demographic structure, the distribution of the population, internal migration and urban development.

The thrust of the Programme of Action adopted at the Cairo Conference has demonstrated the soundness of Tunisia's options in the area of population and development. It highlighted the prevailing awareness of everybody's responsibility towards future generations within the context of a view that attempts to reconcile present concerns with the legitimate aspiration after a better future in which the human individual is given the status of the focal factor in and the main beneficiary of development. As the Programme of Action put it, success in solving population and development problems will largely depend on strengthening cooperation amongst all countries of the world through beneficial communication and mutual respect that takes into account the distinctive characteristics and scale of priorities of every society.

While we welcome the ambitions embodied in the Programme of Action, we wish to emphasize at the same time the need for providing additional financial resources that would make it possible to achieve the objectives set out in the Programme and to realize the aspirations of our peoples after sustainable development. Our developing countries, which bear the brunt of population pressures in addition to the demands of sustainable development, are the countries that bear the burden of external indebtedness and debt servicing with all that that entails in terms of diminishing the capabilities of those countries and scale down the resources that may be available to them for financing environmental and population projects. It is in this context that Tunisia's President called upon the international community to invest the debt servicing dues of developing countries in population and environmental programmes, in keeping with the objectives of the Programme of Action. While we note with satisfaction the readiness of certain States to take action in line with this proposal, we look forward to a much wider and a more robust response.

Population problems today have a close link with the phenomenon of demographic explosion under the heavy burden of which many developing countries are now languishing. This is a phenomenon whose effects in the area of international migration must be given the attention they deserve. Given all the ramifications of the migration problem, Tunisia feels that controlling this phenomenon should be one of the high priorities of the international community in view of its implications for the countries of origin and the countries of destination alike.

We consider that the phenomenon of migration cannot be brought under control unless appropriate conditions are made to exist in the countries of origin to achieve growth and the required level of job opportunities. This underscores the responsibility of all countries, developed and developing alike, in bringing this phenomenon under control through close cooperation between all the parties concerned, especially that the prospects of population growth tend to indicate that the migration problem will be with us for a long time and that the measures proposed in the Programme of Action do not make it possible to face up to the problems involved in a comprehensive manner. Proceeding from this, Tunisia has made a point, at the International Conference on Population and Development, of calling for an international colloquium to bring together all the countries concerned with the problem of migration so that they may study the issues involved from their various aspects. We feel that it is the duty of the international community to accord more attention and care to the status and future of communities working abroad, not only in keeping with the need to uphold human rights, but also in view of the contributions those communities make to the economies of the developed countries of destination.

While reiterating this call which has been supported by many States and organizations, we call upon the General Assembly to adopt a resolution at its present session on convening an international conference on migration and to make preparations to ensure that such a conference convenes before 1997.

The population problem, which has a very special place in the priorities of development programmes, is now at the forefront of all countries' concerns both at the national level and at the level of many an international forum, in view of its impact on the equation of sustainable development. Population growth must decelerate if there is to be greater prosperity for citizens, a more equitable sharing of resources, greater productive employment and a broader dissemination of culture.

In this context, Tunisia calls for the strengthening of cooperation amongst all countries of the world through an exchange of expertise and experience in this field and the formulation of a strategy that takes into account the interests of all, especially those of the developing countries and that will make it possible for us as an international community to promote the prospects of harmonious development for the countries of the North and the South.

Mr. Azikiwe (Nigeria): It is about two months now since the international community met in Cairo, Egypt, for the International Conference on Population and Development, with the aim of drawing up a 20-year plan of action to address the issues of population and development. We went to Cairo with great hopes, though aware of the critical nature of our task and the controversies surrounding some of the issues before the Conference. However, on account of the spirit of give and take, tolerance and a conducive atmosphere of international understanding, we were able to adopt a Programme of Action by consensus.

We now have before us the report of the Conference. We commend the President of the Conference, President Mubarak, the Conference Bureau and its Secretary-General for guiding the Conference to a successful conclusion. It must be mentioned however, that this success was achieved through difficult negotiations, from the sessions of the Preparatory Committee through to the final Conference. As a result of negotiations, the conceptual framework of the Programme of Action was modified, *inter alia*, to address broad development and health issues. The inevitable introduction of the moral and ethical dimensions of certain issues by several delegations nearly stalled the Conference. In these circumstances, it would appear that the consensus reached, which bridged the gap between the opposing groups, was heroic. It is hoped that the presentation of this report will not reopen the debate, but move us forward to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The Nigerian delegation joined in the consensus adoption of the report of the Conference, on the understanding that due respect would be given to national sovereignty and the differences in each country's laws, religious and cultural values in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

Furthermore, our delegation believes that any meaningful population policy must be people-centred. We also recognize that the empowerment of women and gender equality are vital in ensuring sustainable development. As a developing country with an enormous population, Nigeria cannot but be an active partner in the quest for a solution to the problems of population and sustainable development.

It is our ardent hope that the Programme of Action thus adopted will be backed by financial support, as envisaged. It would also be proper for donor countries to consider specific targets of assistance to improve equal access to education for the girl child, to reduce infant and maternal mortality and to provide appropriate and adequate reproductive health services. In this regard, we would urge improved inter-agency cooperation between the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations agencies in order to ensure overall and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, not only at the international level, but also at the regional and national levels.

We hope that the momentum generated and the political will demonstrated in Cairo will be carried forward to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995, and the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen in 1995, where the issues of population and development will resurface.

I commend the report for adoption.

Mr. Mongbe (Benin): Coming to the rostrum after some excellent speakers, especially my brother, Ambassador Lamamra of Algeria, who spoke on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, I shall deliver only a supplement to all the relevant observations and interesting proposals heard during this rich debate on the International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in the beautiful and historic capital of Egypt in September.

We already have some substantial milestones on the road towards sustainable development: the memorable United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in June 1992; the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Economic and Social Council, and the holding of its first two sessions, in June 1993 and May 1994; the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, organized in Bridgetown, Barbados, in April-May this year; and the adoption, in Paris on 17 June this year, of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

It is clear that the International Conference on Population and Development is a new milestone, which supplements the existing ones and to which will be added the results of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in March 1995 in Copenhagen, the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995, and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held in Istanbul in June 1996.

The Cairo Conference could not have succeeded without the personal commitment of President Hosni Mubarak, the exceptional arrangements made by the Government of Egypt and the traditional warm hospitality of the Egyptian people, whose glorious history, covering thousands of years, needs no further comment. My delegation would like to express once again its gratitude and esteem.

Special mention should be made of Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the Secretary-General of the Conference, supported by a team of competent, efficient colleagues whose valuable assistance was always available to participants.

What can we say about the boundless dedication of Mr. Fred Sai of Ghana, Chairman of the Main Committee, and of Ambassador Nicolaas Biegman of the Netherlands and Ambassador Lionel Hurst of Antigua and Barbuda, Chairmen of the two Working Groups, who showed exceptional diplomatic skill in saving the Conference from its many crises?

Now that the media's cameras are no longer pointed at the participants in the Conference, we can more quietly analyse the results of our work and our achievements in terms of the Programme of Action.

First, my delegation deplores the fact that, despite all the precautions taken by the United Nations system and the host country, the Conference almost turned into a non-event because, intentionally or involuntarily, attention was diverted towards certain questions that were secondary to the Conference agenda and the content of the draft Programme of Action.

Indeed, great anxiety gripped all delegations during the first five days of the Conference, when no formulation acceptable to all the parties was found to matters concerning abortion, fertility control, sexuality and reproductive health — to mention only those. Five days of tension and of intense consultation could have been better spent in reflecting more deeply on how to balance population and development. However, these epic days did have the merit of clarifying positions and of drawing lessons which will certainly be helpful for similar exercises in the future.

This is the time and place to point out the immeasurable contribution that was made by religious and moral forces that helped us find humane solutions to controversial problems; without their support, we would have been left with our intentions as mere specialists.

I pay tribute in particular from this rostrum to the profound sense of responsibility of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, who sounded the alarm when the debate, even before the Conference, had become somewhat surrealistic.

Despite all the ups and downs, there is reason to welcome the consensus which we reached — laboriously it is true — and which allowed us to adopt the Programme of Action. As such, the Programme is a masterpiece of compromise and, happily, not a masterpiece of capitulation — that is to say, it is a package of concessions made by all the participants in the Conference. It is not very surprising, therefore, that there are some who have expressed their disappointment or dissatisfaction with the contents of the Programme of Action, which must be considered and understood as a general guideline devised to help States draft national programmes of action to balance population problems and development problems. It is not a legally binding document, although it does commit the international community to achieving qualitative goals in three intimately linked areas, namely: education, in particular the education of women of child-bearing age and girls; the reduction of infant, juvenile and maternal mortality; and the promotion of measures and actions to ensure universal access to family planning and to reproductive health services.

My delegation, while emphasizing those three qualitative objectives, would have liked more emphasis to be placed on development problems. In fact, the Conference was more concerned with controlling the rate of population growth than with any other matter. To be sure, controlling that rate is perhaps reassuring, but we should not forget that in Africa the density level of an economically useful population is far from having been reached. Let us silence the prophets of doom on this continent that for centuries has lost good brains and strong arms to other parts of the world, in conditions that I really cannot mention here. The real problem that the international community should help Africa solve in the matter of population and development could be summarized in four points: battling poverty in all its forms; improving the quality of human resources capable of promoting national, subregional and continental development; defining a development strategy that could marshal the acceptance and effective participation of all sections of the population; and democratizing political power in order to guarantee individual freedoms, respect for human rights, the establishment of a law-abiding State that promotes the stability of institutions and is a spearhead for economic and social development.

My delegation wholeheartedly hopes that within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action efforts and actions will be joined to mitigate the shortcomings and gaps and remedy the omissions. The present debate in the plenary Assembly is in itself a contribution to this.

Furthermore, the first phase of the implementation of the Programme of Action should be reflected in the draft resolution now being prepared in the Second Committee. That draft resolution must give clear indications of the roles, responsibilities, mandates and comparative advantages of the competent intergovernmental bodies, in particular, on the one hand, the Population Commission and, on the other, the bodies of the United Nations system that deal with matters of population and development — and I am referring to the United Nations Population Fund and the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. Such indications must take into consideration the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162, regarding further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

Regarding the Population Commission, it is important to undertake three interrelated operations which stem from the results of the Cairo Conference: drafting new terms of reference and the mandate of the Commission to give it an intergovernmental structure instead of being merely a body of experts; taking account of the development dimension by renaming the commission the Population and Development Commission; and increasing to 53 the number of States members of the Commission with a three-year term. Such a change in the present Population Commission would help ensure the correct follow-up to and implementation of the Programme of Action and guarantee transparency in decision-making.

Furthermore, my delegation considers that the problem of divorcing or separating the United Nations Population Fund from the United Nations Development Programme — two bodies that now have the same governing board or executive committee — could not possibly be solved at this session of the General Assembly. The two partners could give each other mutual support until we have analysed the results of the implementation of the draft resolution to which I have referred, and after that we could consider the process of separation. But if the general trend is already to have two independent executive bodies, my delegation would not be opposed to this. As usual, my delegation will show flexibility and a spirit of understanding and responsibility.

Regardless of the decision that will be taken, Benin hopes that as part of the implementation of the Programme of Action the activities of the United Nations Population Fund will henceforth be directed more towards combating poverty and carrying out grass-roots development projects than towards any other forms of intervention whose direct impact on improving the living and working conditions of people is not immediately noticeable, or, should I say, palpable.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm Benin's position that it will participate responsibly in the patient quest for humanly acceptable solutions to the whole set of problems of population and development which in many respects constitute one of the important parameters for sustainable development.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to begin by paying tribute to the successful outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development and to avail myself of this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation and thanks to President Hosni Mubarak and to the Government and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt for their efforts that made the Conference a success. I should like also to extend our gratitude to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference, for the great efforts she deployed, and to all her collaborators, especially to Mr. Fred Sai and his colleagues.

Population policies are closely linked to economic growth, preservation of the environment and sustainable development. Although the spirit of detente and understanding has become uppermost in international relations, yet, we must admit that that spirit has not embraced all the problems that face the international community. There are many economic and social problems that have defied solution and the overall picture of economic growth is not very reassuring, particularly in many developing countries where development objectives have been frustrated. In view of this situation, it is necessary to deploy determined and concerted efforts to promote cooperation in all fields with the aim of formulating and implementing population policies that would guarantee prosperity and progress for all societies.

Any sound development policy should focus primarily on the individual human being, who is both the means and the end of development. It is unacceptable that poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy should be the lot of a fourth of the world's population, most of whom live in the third world. It is also unacceptable that three fourths of the world's income should fall to 16 per cent of the world's population namely the peoples of the developed countries. Such conditions cannot lead to sustainable and equitable development. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all countries to rethink their economic policies and strategies with the aim of accelerating international economic growth and achieving equitable development.

My country has always considered the human individual to be the focal point of all its economic, social and political concerns. Therefore, population questions have always been an integral part of Libya's overall social and economic development efforts that aim at raising the standard of living and improving the quality of life for all members of society without distinction. We have spared no effort in trying to achieve this goal within the framework of international and regional cooperation in the areas of economic growth and sustainable development.

My country has always accorded a very high priority to the population problem. We have done this by focusing on investment in such sectors as education, training, the integration of women in all the activities of society, general health care, housing, rural development, health care for women and children and in many other areas of human development. This has had the effect of raising the standard of living of the population in a short time. The rate of school enrolment has increased and the ratio of female school attendance has risen to 48.7 per cent in all levels of education in academic year 1992-1993. We have also achieved record levels of health care for all citizens. My country makes it a priority to provide suitable and healthy housing for all families, in the belief that housing is a fundamental human need. We are therefore doing our utmost to provide every citizen with a dwelling as well as with means of transportation and job opportunities.

Mr. Gujral (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In working for these goals, the housing programmes that have been included in our development plans since the 1970s have been expanded, and the necessary funds for building housing complexes have been allocated. Financing is also made available, through banks and housing cooperatives, to individuals who wish to build their own homes. In keeping with our housing policy, free housing is also provided for poor families on social security. Those efforts have led to the provision of a healthy dwelling for every Libyan family and we have been able to eliminate all the slums and shanty towns that used to exist on the outskirts of our larger cities. On the other hand, we are also providing social benefits for all those who are eligible with special emphasis on public utilities, which have been among the important sectors in our development programmes over the past few years.

My country also pays special attention to the development of rural areas in order to curb internal migration and relieve overcrowding in the larger cities. We have now succeeded in reversing internal migration. These efforts will culminate with the completion of the great artificial river project which would bring water from the desert to the arable land in the north of the country, on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The United Nations has always been a source of innovative approaches. Many of the ideas set forth by the United Nations have been adopted by the international community and have been incorporated in the national legislation of various countries. The conferences and events scheduled for 1995 and 1996 as well as for this year, will afford an opportunity to realistically evaluate what is actually achieved and to scientifically analyse the causes that impede the implementation of development plans and strategies. The outlines and parameters of what we have to do are clear enough. It is in the area of implementation that we fall short of what should be done. This is what we should focus on in future. United Nations bodies must play a greater role in reversing the negative trends that now prevail in the world by evaluating such challenges in a practical manner. The United Nations must play a major part in enhancing social development within a comprehensive framework that takes into account the global concept of development.

At a time when the international community, within United Nations guidelines, is striving to integrate the individual human being into development plans and to raise standards of living, one of the most important organs of the Organization, namely the Security Council, has been adopting decisions and resolutions that impose embargoes on certain peoples. The effects of such embargoes are felt most acutely by the most vulnerable sectors of society, namely children, women and the elderly. For instance, the embargo imposed by the Security Council on my country has caused and continues to cause great suffering to the Libyan people and has wrought great damage that is estimated at billions of dollars in every economic and social sector. In addition, lack of vaccines and other medicines has caused many deaths, including those of more than 350 infants. Some 150 women have died in childbirth because of lack of medication. Moreover, there have been accidents on domestic airline flights owing to the lack of spare parts that the Security Council prevents Libya from importing.

Some chapters of the Programme of Action are reasonably well balanced, while others are less so, especially where it concerns religious, cultural or moral issues that differ from one society to the other. Proceeding from religious values and principles which advocate freedom, justice and equality, my delegation wishes to reiterate what we affirmed at the Cairo Conference, namely that population policies and programmes should aim at creating a balance between population, development and resources within the context of respect for an observance of every people's religious beliefs, traditions and legislation. No country or culture has the right to impose its tenets or outlook on another. People should enjoy a natural family life and should be raised within normal families, in keeping with the tenets of all religions.

The modern phenomena of alienation, juvenile delinquency, the trafficking in children, drug abuse, sexual diseases such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) — particularly in the developed countries — result from the lack of natural family life and the disintegration of the family unit. We hope that the forthcoming international conferences, such as the Social Summit and the World Conference on Women, will find the necessary solutions to such problems.

I wish in conclusion to stress that the recommendations of the Cairo Conference can be applied only in the context of respect for the sovereign rights of all States, and in a manner that does not contradict the religious beliefs, cultural values and domestic legislation of any nation.

Mr. Horoi (Solomon Islands): My delegation welcomes the opportunity afforded by this debate to focus on the achievements of the recent International Conference on Population and Development and to express the strong support of my country, the Solomon Islands, for the Programme of Action it adopted.

Like the many speakers who preceded me, I wish to record my country's assessment of the process of the International Conference and of the Conference itself as one of major significance and achievement. Part of this success the international community owes to the host of the Conference, the Government and the people of Egypt, to whom we must extend our gratitude and appreciation. Solomon Islands is pleased to have participated fully in preparations for Cairo from an early stage of the process. As soon as the full mandate for the Conference was defined and the substantive preparatory process established, it was clear to us that the purpose of the Conference would be important to us. This has certainly proved to be the case. I would like to use this opportunity to explain why.

Solomon Islands has a population of slightly less than 350,000 people. By the standards of most other countries, this would be seen as presenting no challenge at all. Alongside this relatively small population, we have a growth rate of 3.5 per cent. This presents Solomon Islands with a doubling of its population in 20 years and places us towards the upper level in terms of population growth. The consequences of such rapid population growth for a small, least-developed country such as the Solomon Islands made the Conference process and outcome particularly important. This was especially true given the Conference's emphasis on addressing the quality-of-life needs of all peoples, no matter how large or small their overall national population levels might be.

As we prepared for the Cairo Conference, our delegation was very pleased to work closely with other delegations from neighbouring Pacific Island countries, many of which have similar situations and face similar challenges in the area of population and development. For many of us the Cairo Conference process was our first international involvement with a population conference. There were 14 Pacific island delegations at Cairo, not an insignificant number in the overall total of 183 delegations. This compares to three Pacific island delegations at the 1984 Mexico City conference on population. We were very pleased to work closely with our Pacific neighbours, developing common positions on various aspects of the Programme of Action, both at the Preparatory Committee sessions and as the Conference's Main Committee completed work on the Programme of Action. The adoption by the countries of the Pacific region of the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, in November 1993, was a further example of cooperation within our region and of commitment to the objectives of the Conference.

As a result of our collective efforts, Pacific delegations were able to feel a real sense of ownership of the Cairo Programme of Action and a commitment to the fulfilment of its directions. We now have before us in the Programme of Action a comprehensive yet realistic chart of the actions each member of the international community must take to fulfil the hopes and promises so clearly spelled out in Cairo. I am pleased to be able to say that Solomon Islands accepts fully the challenges contained in the Programme of Action. We are very conscious that we as a country must take the lead in fulfilling these commitments. As the same time, we must also accept the realities of our situation.

To meet the quantitative goals set in the Programme of Action will be a major task for my country. The provision of basic education and health care for all Solomon Islanders is certainly the objective we seek. To meet that objective over the 20-year period of the Programme of Action will require our continuing commitment and the steadfast and growing support of our development partners, both bilateral and multilateral.

It is for this reason that we are very encouraged by the commitment contained in the Programme of Action from the international community as a whole and especially from the developed countries that they will contribute fully and consistently to help our efforts. Without such a commitment, the Programme of Action will have little meaning for us and for many other developing countries.

Allow me to refer, in this context of international support, to the assistance Solomon Islands receives for its development, and particularly that from international organizations. We acknowledge with very real appreciation the assistance we have been receiving from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and all other United Nations funds and specialized agencies working in the area of population and development.

We wish to express particular thanks for the work of UNFPA's regional office for the South Pacific, which is based in Suva, Fiji. Its Regional Director, Mr. Faysal Abdel-Gadir, and his very able and dedicated staff are to be highly commended for their work, both in the context of UNFPA's Programme for the region and in the preparation for the Cairo Conference. Mention should also be made of the fine work of UNFPA's regional support team for the Pacific. This group of population and development technical specialists, drawn from all the major United Nations agencies, provides essential backstopping for our own national personnel.

I do not wish to conclude without expressing my country's very real appreciation to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, both in her capacity as the head of UNFPA and in her role as Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development. The leadership and determination she has demonstrated over many years with regard to the cause of population and development is in the finest tradition of the United Nations.

So, too, is the outcome of the Cairo Conference. Through the Conference process, the international community — countries, non-governmental groups and the United Nations system — has shown that it is able to address the challenges of our time and reach agreement on specific actions to resolve the problems we all face. My country was proud to be part of this great endeavour and is committed to the implementation of the Conference's Programme of Action.

Mr. Swain (Marshall Islands): I wish to again convey my congratulations and felicitations to the President, as well as to the other Assembly officers, and to commend him particularly for the manner in which he has steered the deliberations of this Assembly.

I also wish to take this opportunity to once more express my delegation's deep gratitude to the Egyptian Government and people for the warm hospitality and kindness they so readily extended to us during our stay in Cairo. The excellent arrangements made by, and the tireless efforts of, Mrs. Nafis Sadik and her able staff — some of whom are here in the Hall today — should also be acknowledged and commended.

I will begin my brief statement today by recalling that the Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development so aptly observed in Cairo that the Conference was a landmark event for all those involved in population and development, and for the billions of people who count on us to help them realize their hopes for the future.

The understanding of delegations led to the adoption of a Programme of Action which was described later as an expanded international policy on population and development. Implicit in that description is the fact that a spirit of compromise and consensus was witnessed in Cairo, a spirit that must be our guide at the implementation stage.

I wish now to highlight several matters related to the population and development issues raised in Cairo by my Minister of Health and Environment, issues which are of great importance to the Republic of the Marshall Islands and need to be dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity. They include reproductive health, the empowerment of women, the education of the girl-child and capacity building. The interconnectedness of these issues within the broader framework of sustainable development in general warranted their inclusion in the Programme of Action.

We attended the Cairo Conference with high hopes, expecting solutions to the development constraints unique to island environments such as ours. We still hope to see our aspirations successfully realized at the implementation stage, which will require a momentum similar to that witnessed in Cairo. I might add that the constraints we face are further compounded by one of the highest population growth rates in our region today — 4 per cent annually.

It goes without saying that the required momentum will involve following through on the commitment fully to bring to fruition the commonly used phrase "new global partnership". As I understand it, one third of the new and additional resources needed to implement the Programme of Action is now expected to come from external sources. This will be the impetus for the successful implementation of the Programme.

At the end of the Cairo Conference, Mrs. Sadik enthusiastically informed us that her Office would spare no effort in seeing through the implementation of the Programme of Action. There was profound foresight in her pledge, and we add our support to her efforts. In so doing, however, we fully realize that there is an immediate need for follow-up actions to the Cairo Conference at all levels to ensure full participation by all concerned parties. In this connection, we informally consulted with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative, based in Suva, Fiji, on the manner in which the follow-up work in our region should begin. Indeed, we are very anxious to discover how ongoing national actions can best be complemented or improved upon by external experience and expertise.

In this vein, we believe that while the roles, responsibilities and mandates of all relevant United Nations organs dealing with population and development issues should be reviewed and strengthened in the light of the Conference process, with a view to reflecting current realities, the immediate implementation of specific provisions of the Programme of Action should begin immediately. This institutional review must include the Population Commission, which we believe should be revitalized and restructured to become a Population and Development Commission, much like the Commission on Sustainable Development. Expansion of its membership, however, should be carefully considered in the light of transparency.

We view with great interest the proposal for a separate executive board of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). We note that some delegations have expressed reservations on the issue, and we believe that consideration of such a board can best be undertaken after careful review of all other boards called for in resolution 48/162, and since we do not have the time to do so at this session of the Assembly.

We realized at the Cairo Conference that major cultural, religious and philosophical differences divided us on population issues; yet we showed resolve in finding solutions to common and immediate population issues that infringed on our ability to provide better living standards for our citizens. The Programme of Action — which, in our view, places the accent on national sovereignty — is evidence of this. Let us all uphold the principles outlined in chapter II of the Programme.

The time has come to undertake the follow-up work at all levels and to ensure full participation of all the parties concerned so as to prepare a better world for generations to come.

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, let me first of all offer my sincere congratulations to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development and her colleagues in the Secretariat for the immense efforts they put into making the Conference a success. Mrs. Sadik fully deserves our appreciation and tribute.

My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to Egypt for hosting the Conference in Cairo.

The International Conference on Population Development has produced a very major and comprehensive Programme of Action. It has incorporated in concrete and substantive ways the new concepts of development as envisaged in the international agreements of preceding United Nations Conferences. It will provide substantial inputs and contributions to the World Social Summit and the Fourth World Conference on Women, both to be convened in 1995, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be convened in 1996. Its Programme of Action represents another significant step toward addressing the links between population, sustained economic growth, sustainable development and women's empowerment. It reflects the growing international awareness that population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption and the environment are so closely interconnected that none of them can be considered in isolation. It also acknowledges that both developed and developing countries have shared but differentiated responsibilities in bringing about sustainable development.

The Cairo Conference, to state the obvious, is not an end in itself. It is a beginning of a constructive and collective approach in dealing with the myriad global population issues. Its final success now depends on the willingness of Governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, the international community and other concerned organizations and individuals to translate the Cairo Programme of Action into reality. In this context, my delegation would like to emphasize the essence of genuine partnership of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system in the field of operational activities. The dynamic role of non-governmental organizations and the private sector must not be ignored but, rather, recognized as an important and perhaps essential factor in obtaining the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action.

Thailand stands ready to cooperate with the international community in the implementation phase of the Programme of Action. At the national level, Thailand has integrated the World Population Plan of Action adopted at the first World Population Conference held in Bucharest in 1974 in its national population plan. At the same time, Thailand has reviewed and updated its population policies and strategies so that they would be more in line with the revised World Population Plan of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population held in Mexico City in 1984. The authorities concerned of the Thai Government are currently examining the Cairo Programme of Action and translating it, where applicable, to concrete programmes and projects for our Kingdom.

Thailand has also been pursuing an integrated development approach taking into account the interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. In line with the Cairo Programme of Action, which places human beings at the centre of development — and rightly so — we believe that the key to this integrated approach lies in the development of human resources.

As part of our investment in human resources, family planning and reproductive health services have been placed at the top of Thailand's population agenda; the empowerment of women has also become a major focus. We welcome the goals of the Conference aimed at reducing infant, child and maternal mortality, and those which would provide universal access to reproductive health and family planning services. We also have placed emphasis on the importance of environmentally sound urban development in line with the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action. Urban development in Thailand is of particular importance in light of the massive rural-to-urban migration occurring in Thailand. We therefore support the recommendations of the Conference concerning adequate protection and assistance to displaced persons.

Thailand believes that with regard to realizing the Conference's objectives, developing countries can achieve much more through cooperation than in isolation. For this reason, South-South cooperation is of particular importance. One example of Thailand's active participation in South-South cooperation is our membership in "Partners in Development: a South-South Initiative", which was formally established during the Conference and which has been particularly successful in the area of family planning. In pooling our experiences and resources and sharing what we have learned with other nations, we hope to further the Conference's goals.

Thailand has also established an active programme in support of technical cooperation among developing countries activities in general, and has been active in organizing South-South exchange programmes in the area of population. This has so far been mainly in the form of fellowships in community based family planning. We also plan to increase the number of exchange activities in the area of family planning and reproductive health, with special priority given to our neighbours. The United Nations Population Fund has contributed $1.2 million to support these activities.

At the international level, to reap the benefits of the Cairo deliberations on the implementation of the Programme of Action, political will must be backed by financial resources from public as well as private sectors, from non-governmental organizations or from the international community. Those among us that are capable of increased financial support for the Programme should do so.

Finally, Thailand is of the view that the Population Commission should have an important role to play in monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, especially as it is linked to the issues of development and development planning. It should do so in close collaboration and cooperation with the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the United Nations Population Fund.

Thailand attaches great importance to the fulfilment of the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, and, as stated earlier, Thai governmental agencies have already taken a number of actions consistent with the objectives of the Conference. But to ensure the complete success of the Conference, a concerted, cooperative international effort is required. Hence, we would like to reaffirm our readiness to join the international community in this enterprise in order to link the issues of population and all development planning and implementation in an integrated and comprehensive manner to ensure a better world for our children and for future generations.

Mrs. Leeds (United States of America): My delegation is grateful for the opportunity to share some of its ideas and concerns regarding the vital task of implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

In Cairo nearly 180 nations agreed on a forward-looking Programme of Action that embodies a comprehensive new approach to dealing with issues related to population and development. This new approach properly recognizes that population and development policies should give priority to reproductive health and family planning, education and empowerment of women, improved child survival, strengthening of families and promotion of sustainable economic development.

My delegation would like to congratulate Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Mr. Joseph Chamie and all the staff of the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development for their important part in making the Cairo Conference a stunning success. Thanks go also to the Government and the people of Egypt for being such gracious hosts for that historic Conference.

As we all celebrate our success in Cairo, we must keep in mind that the lasting importance of the Programme of Action depends on a determined effort by the international community to follow up on its implementation. This is no simple task. The Programme of Action has laid out a set of ambitious recommendations for policy and programme action and for mobilizing the resources necessary to move forward with implementation.

Achievement of the goals set forth in the Programme of Action and full integration of its many important elements will require a sustained and concerted effort by Governments, in partnership with non-governmental organizations, international agencies and the private commercial sector. United Nations agencies and international financial institutions have a key leadership role in follow-up, as outlined in chapter XVI of the Cairo Programme of Action. In particular, the chapter focuses on two priorities.

First, it focuses on coordinated follow-up action by United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. Implementation of the new comprehensive approach to population assistance will require a coordinated response by a number of United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Secretary-General of the United Nations should begin an inter-agency process to clearly define agency roles and responsibilities and ensure frequent working-level consultations among the agencies concerned. Better coordination is also needed among other donors, including the international financial institutions. This should include donor coordination at the field level involving host-Government officials so that country needs can be matched with available resources.

Secondly, chapter XVI focuses on regular monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action. We all agree that it is crucial to develop a monitoring system to track progress towards implementing the recommendations and achieving the goals defined in the Programme of Action. My delegation urges that three important points be kept in mind when designing this monitoring system.

First, the monitoring system should be active rather than passive. In other words, monitoring should involve more than reporting and compiling indicators. Countries should identify policy and programmatic obstacles to the full implementation of the Cairo recommendations, and United Nations agencies and other development partners should use this information to help overcome those obstacles.

Secondly, monitoring reports should be packaged to encourage their use by policy makers. These reports should be concise and action-oriented and include both quantitative and qualitative data. They should be designed to clearly communicate the issues to decision makers.

Thirdly, the monitoring system should not be overly burdensome on Governments. There has been a proliferation of monitoring requirements in recent years. These need to be harmonized and consolidated to reduce the burden on Governments and improve the quality and consistency of information. On the issue of who should be responsible for the monitoring system, my delegation suggests that the Population Division, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, as appropriate, be asked to take the lead in compiling monitoring information and issuing a periodic report, no more frequently than biennially. The UNFPA and other specialized agencies with mandates for providing programme assistance would be important consumers of monitoring data, as would Governments, non-governmental organizations, the media and the general public.

We look forward to working in partnership with other countries and institutions to fully implement the landmark Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Our collective responsibility is to take that vision and make it a reality.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is pleased to have an opportunity to share its views with other Member States on agenda item 158, entitled "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development".

On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to pay tribute to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other staff members for their energetic efforts geared towards the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. In particular, the UNFPA is to be commended for having made positive contributions towards addressing population issues during the past 25 years.

The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo last September, provided an important occasion for a comprehensive review of the population issue in close linkage with sustainable development, and made a significant mark in promoting better understanding and awareness by the international community of the interrelationships of the issues of population and development. Those factors distinguished the Cairo Conference from the previous ones, held in 1974 and 1984.

The Conference also adopted, in a spirit of consensus, the Programme of Action containing the detailed objectives, principles and goals for resolving the population issue, as an integral task in achieving sustainable development. The adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action established a common view and an integrated world approach to population and development issues, and was a milestone in that it provided a foundation for revitalized efforts by the international community to achieve sustainable development.

My delegation believes that the successful outcome of the Cairo Conference will be a positive contribution to the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, which are to be held next year.

The international community now faces the task of translating the Programme of Action into tangible results. In this context, my delegation believes that due attention should be paid to the following points with regard to the implementation of the Programme.

In implementing the Programme of Action, each country should give priority to the formulation of national population policies that are in conformity with the interests of its own people and suit its specific conditions and realities. Population is an issue related to human beings — the most precious and powerful resource when it comes to achieving sustainable development. The population issue should therefore be addressed on the basis of respect for the will of the people — in other words, on a voluntary basis.

In every country and region durable peace is a prerequisite for the implementation of the Programme of Action. Member States should refrain from any military action that would aggravate tensions and could lead to the outbreak of war. They should create a peaceful environment conducive to implementation of the Programme of Action.

The mobilization of sufficient financial resources at the national and international levels is also important for implementation of the Programme of Action. To this end, developed countries should meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for overall official development assistance. They should also take the lead in creating a favourable international economic environment to enable developing countries to increase their domestic financial resources through sustained economic growth.

My delegation believes that South-South cooperation could be conducive to implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation notes with appreciation the fact that the Cairo Programme of Action stresses the importance of South-South cooperation and of the new commitment to the provision of increased international financial resources for its development.

The success of the Cairo Conference also depends on there being an effective mechanism within the United Nations system to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels. Therefore, there must be timely designation of an appropriate organization to monitor and review implementation. To this end, my delegation looks forward to the UNFPA's being given an enhanced role.

In conclusion, I assure the Assembly that the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains committed to implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

Mr. Abibi (Congo) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation fully endorses the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 by the Permanent Representative of Algeria during the General Assembly's consideration of this agenda item, entitled "Report of the International Conference on Population and Development".

We should like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation of the conclusions — strategically important to all mankind — contained in the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo.

By introducing an innovative approach, emphasizing in particular the links between population and sustainable development, the Programme of Action presents the international community with a series of population and development measures that complement one another admirably and can help different countries to confront the demographic pressures that are foreseen. Its adoption by consensus clearly reflects the international community's growing awareness of the interdependence of population, development and environment, as well as its renewed commitment to confronting, in a spirit of solidarity, the various critical problems in these areas.

As everyone knows, these problems are numerous and are particularly acute for the developing countries, which is why we attach great importance to implementation of the measures set out in the Cairo Programme of Action. From this point of view, two factors seem to us to be decisive.

The first is unquestionably the political will of States to honour their commitments. Without that will, there is a danger that the capital accumulated throughout the process of preparing for the Conference and in Cairo — of which the Programme of Action is the admirable outcome — will not be exploited. The mobilization of sufficient resources, both nationally and internationally, is one of the essential conditions for the Programme's implementation.

The second factor is linked to the essential role of the United Nations system in following up implementation of the Programme of Action and in the critical function of coordinating action to mobilize the necessary new and additional resources. Against this background, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is called upon to play a decisive role. It is not overstating the case to say that if the UNFPA is successfully to confront the complex tasks stemming from this new situation the time has come for the General Assembly to follow up on its resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993 by considering the possibility of giving UNFPA its own governing body.

In fact, the United Nations Population Fund must be able to benefit systematically and continuously from instructions from its own executive board, in carrying out new missions to follow up implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The Republic of the Congo is determined to take the objectives of the Programme of Action into account in drawing up its own economic and social development plans. We reaffirm here our readiness to cooperate fully with the international community in implementing the Programme.

Finally, my delegation would like once again to say how deeply we appreciate the remarkable work of Mrs. Nafis Sadik as Secretary-General of the Conference throughout the preparatory process and during the actual conduct of the International Conference on Population and Development. We would like once again to express our gratitude to the Government of Egypt for the facilities it provided, which greatly contributed to the success of our meeting in Cairo.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan): The beginning of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly coincided with another outstanding event in the life of the international community — the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, which concluded its sessions, which, though often heated, were productive and constructive, just before we all gathered here in New York to put forward our collective vision and wisdom in addressing many global issues.

Since time has passed very quickly since the Cairo Conference, the report we have today before us (A/CONF.171/13), while taking us back to many interesting episodes of the pre-Cairo process and of the Conference itself, provides us with an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on what was achieved in Cairo in a somewhat more calm and responsible way in the United Nations General Assembly and, more importantly, to set in motion the process of the follow-up to the Cairo Conference and of the implementation of its Programme of Action.

At this juncture we must reconfirm that, without exaggeration, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development was a significant breakthrough in our common vision of future global development. Through the spirit of goodwill, partnership and political will shown by all participants, the Conference — which brought together for a serious dialogue all major cultures and religions of the world, its basic schools of thought and ethics — was able to produce a global political consensus on many potentially divisive issues, which took the form of the forward-looking Programme of Action.

Reflecting as it does a serious move to make issues of population inseparable from overall issues of sustainable economic and social development and the environment, this voluminous document represents another major and far-reaching step forward on the basis of the results of the Conference in Mexico 10 years ago. The main outcome of the Cairo Programme of Action is that it makes the empowerment of women one of the core elements of sustainable development. We expect, therefore, that the Cairo Plan of Action, while containing specific goals and recommendations on such important population issues as infant and maternal mortality, education, reproductive health and family planning, will serve as a bridge between different aspects of global sustainable development, thus providing impetus to such development.

Issues raised in the context of the Cairo Plan of Action are of great importance for Kazakhstan, a new emerging democracy on the political map of the world. As with any other major United Nations forum, the Cairo Conference became for Kazakhstan a valuable source of learning about the trends of international relations in general and of sustainable development and population issues in particular.

Kazakhstan's Government fully understands that there cannot be one single universal way or approach to resolving population issues in different countries. It is clear that each country has its own priorities in this field as it faces its own unique set of problems and challenges which stem from historical political and economic development.

Kazakhstan is no exception. Without dwelling too long on the problems of population in Kazakhstan, I should like to say that the Republic, with its traditionally high birth rates among local populations and excessive population concentration in rural areas, has been carrying out relevant family planning policies with the emphasis on maternal and child health care. The situation in this area was and continues to be seriously aggravated by the major environmental degradation of vast regions around the shrinking Aral Sea, the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing grounds and the Caspian Sea, as well as by severe industrial pollution in eastern and southern Kazakhstan.

The transition from a centrally planned to a market economy brought new and sometimes unfamiliar problems for Kazakhstan. Socio-economic instability, a sharp economic downturn and high inflation seriously affected the living standards of our population, especially its most unprotected groups. Under such circumstances, many families have chosen to have fewer children. Local studies of the death rate for the last six years also indicate the linkage between the rise in that index and social and economic setbacks. The other problems that emerged or were aggravated as a consequence of major political and economic developments in the former USSR, and which are matters of deep concern for Kazakhstan's Government, are high rates of migration of the population, increasing unemployment and serious difficulties in providing adequate social protection, health care and education because of the structural changes in these sectors previously run solely by the State, and the lack of adequate management of the process of their reform and adaptation.

The presence of unresolved old problems in the field of population related to the previous disproportionate economic development of Kazakhstan and the environmental degradation of large parts of the country, and new problems caused by economic transition combined with the lack of adequate resources, experience and expertise to tackle them, impede the overall process of economic reforms in Kazakhstan that are essential for its successful development.

Given the deteriorating demographic situation in Kazakhstan, our Government is fully aware of the need to elaborate and implement a comprehensive national policy in the field of population which will fully fit in the context of the new economic challenges faced by Kazakhstan, as well as of the efforts of the international community to ensure global sustainable development.

To make this possible, the technical and financial assistance of the international community is essential at the multilateral and the bilateral levels. Assistance in carrying out our national family-planning programmes would be particularly helpful if it focused on setting up regional family-planning centres, training administrative and medical personnel, improving the system of maternal and child health care, introducing modern methods of demographic data-collection and analysis, developing new skills of demographers, and so on.

In the light of all this, my delegation welcomes the universal nature of the Cairo Programme of Action, which represents the collective commitment of all countries in the field of population and development. Of course, there are some outstanding issues to be resolved. Nobody doubts that the availability of sufficient financial resources and adequate institutional improvements and adjustments are essential to making the consistent, coherent and well-coordinated implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action possible. The Programme of Action's complementarity at the national, subregional, regional and international levels is also crucial.

In the final analysis, it is not the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action that matters but our collective ability to live up to the mutual commitments set forth in the Programme and to translate the political consensus of the Cairo Conference into a consensus of action throughout the entire process of the follow-up to it. The Republic of Kazakhstan supports the Programme of Action of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and is committed to making it a reality.

Mr. Dubček (Slovakia): We are living at a time when it takes a tremendous effort to discover some new way to bring about partnership and coexistence on the local, national, regional and global levels. There currently exists a variety of proposals on the best way to reach those goals. During the past few years, several far-reaching events have occurred that have become milestones in the sphere of international activities. One such event took place recently in Cairo: the International

Conference on Population and Development, which came to a successful conclusion this past September.

Our delegation would like to express its thanks to the secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development, headed by Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Secretary-General of the Conference and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund. Let me also thank Egypt for its excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.

On 13 September 1994 the Conference approved its Programme of Action, thereby demonstrating that the world community can address the challenges posed by population and development and that it can represent an effective balance of views. Our governmental delegation in Cairo was composed of a broad spectrum of representatives from various governmental and non-governmental organizations. Our delegation found the discussions that took place in both formal and informal meetings to be a tremendously enriching experience.

The implementation of the Programme of Action requires effective follow-up actions. We believe that the Economic and Social Council should play a useful role in the follow-up to Cairo. In accordance with paragraph 16.8 of the Programme of Action, our experts will prepare a national programme of action that will focus directly on our particular priorities, thereby disseminating the Programme of Action. The Programme of Action is a prelude to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Slovakia supports the premise that the advancement of the role of women in society is a crucial tool in bringing about concrete change.

Slovakia, as a Central European country with an economy in transition, welcomes the proposed activities at the national and the international levels. Cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe and other United Nations agencies and organizations will speed our efforts to solve problems related to population and development. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations will seek the support needed to implement the goals, objectives and actions of this Programme.

The Programme of Action has set out the objectives and the required actions for the beginning of the next century. As a result, we have been led to a fundamental re-examination of the goals and strategies of national and international population programmes and of the very language we use to talk about these programmes. This, in turn, will certainly bring about progress in the many fields related to population and development. Rapid population growth, unchanged patterns of consumption and a lack of environmental technologies continue to be major obstacles to social and economic development. The contrast between the rich and the poor is becoming greater and greater, both within and between States. We are facing growing imbalances between population growth and resource-use that pose a threat, while at the same time large portions of the world's population are being excluded from economic and social development.

The Cairo Conference clearly fulfilled its mission. It paved the way for the world community to bring about further economic growth and development, gender equality, the equality and empowerment of women, a reduction of poverty, the creation of jobs and the promotion of social integration. The broad consensus among Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations regarding population and development is of the utmost importance to the entire population.

Mr. Cissé (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): The splendid job done by Mrs. Nafis Sadik and her team, in close cooperation with the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations, was one of the key factors in the success of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September. We should add that the warm welcome and customary hospitality accorded all the participants in the Conference by His Excellency Mr. Hosni Mubarak and the Government and people of Egypt greatly facilitated the historic consensus achieved in Cairo.

This consensus was unquestionably the result of the international community's unprecedented recognition of the need for the United Nation to consider expressly, in an integrated manner, all demographic questions in their relationship to the maintenance of economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, gender equality and reproductive health. This commitment was also the result of the international community's nearly unanimous acknowledgment of the central role to be played by the individual in the development process.

The delegation of Senegal fully endorses the statement made by my colleague from Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Therefore, I will confine myself to highlighting a few points of particular importance to my delegation, *inter alia* the implementation and follow-up of the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

It was Senegal's privilege to be one of the Vice-Chairmen both of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself. The interest shown by my country in these matters is even greater now as we enter the implementation stage of the Programme of Action.

For this reason, immediately after the Cairo Conference, our country set up a small group to consider further the national machinery needed to implement and follow up the Programme of Action. This group was open to non-governmental organizations and will study ways and means to submit periodic reports on the implementation of the results achieved in Cairo at the national level. It will also study changes to our demographic programme in the light of the Cairo Programme of Action.

At the regional level, I should like to recall that Senegal hosted the African Conference on Population which helped us to establish a common position which was cemented by the adoption of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, the Family and Sustainable Development.

Africa's commitment to dealing with the major problems of population and development and the links between the two can be seen through the creation, within the Organization of African Unity, of an African Population Commission. It is clear that an appropriate regional follow-up machinery requires the constant support of the international community for Africa, a continent which is facing the most serious population and development problems.

In this connection, I should like to stress the need for further resources to help African countries to satisfy their fundamental needs in terms of national demographic programmes. Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations regional bodies and other competent regional and subregional bodies should bring their demographic activities into line with the need to take fully into account an integrated approach to population and development problems as specified in the Programme of Action.

With regard to the follow-up by the United Nations system, my delegation would like to recall that in resolution 48/162, the General Assembly called for the creation of a separate executive board for the United Nations Population Fund, and for its establishment to be considered after the International Conference on Population and Development. My country is following closely all developments in this connection because the volume of work of the United Nations Population Fund will increase considerably with the implementation of the Programme of Action incorporates development and population questions.

However, if this issue is not settled at the present session, my delegation believes that it could be referred to the Economic and Social Council. In order to facilitate an effective follow-up to the Programme of Action and ensure that we are on course half-way through the Programme in 1999, a final decision on this question should be taken, at the latest, by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which will reconsider the governing bodies of United Nations development programmes and funds in accordance with resolution 48/162.

Specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies should periodically report on changes in their activities, programmes and mid-term strategies so that they can be incorporated in the follow-up to the Conference.

In the same way, the Population Commission, which will play a central role in monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action at the intergovernmental level, should be restructured in terms both of its mandate and of its composition. Its programme of work should be updated and rationalized so that it can carry out the tasks assigned to it in effectively carrying out the goals set out at the Conference.

In conclusion, the delegation of Senegal believes that the United Nations will not be able efficiently to reach the goals of the Cairo Programme of Action in the next two decades unless the world Organization streamlines, harmonizes and works towards greater coordination of its activities in the areas of population and development.

To that we might add that if the necessary resources are not allocated, the legitimate hopes raised by the Programme of Action will soon be dashed and the Cairo Conference may end up as nothing more than just another conference to go down in the annals of the history of international relations. This is something we must avoid.

Mr. Larrain (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The recent International Conference on Population and

Development held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September highlighted the importance of this question at the present time. Similarly, it made it clear that the United Nations is able to face the challenges brought about up by the new realities.

We should like to congratulate and express our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and her team, for the splendid job done both during the preparatory process and during the meetings of the Conference. We believe that the successful results obtained are due largely to the efforts that were made during the preparatory process. In the specific case of Latin America, various prior meetings facilitated the preparation of countries and made possible regional consensuses on a range of complex and delicate issues dealt with by this Conference.

The Conference highlighted the need to promote the importance of cultural coexistence in the work of the United Nations and also to make compatible various values and basic principles of different cultures.

At the national level, we believe that the impetus was given to the plans and programmes of various ministries involved in population and development matters. At the same time, we are making progress towards sustainable development. In this endeavour, policies must take account of the adequacy of resources needed for population matters, as well as the level, growth and distribution of such resources.

Massive participation by society, the work in all negotiations, is one example of the cooperation which must serve as a basis for promoting the role of non-governmental organizations in multilateral activities. Their role in implementing the programmes must be assumed with the same enthusiasm as has already been shown, in order to ensure the continuity of their contribution.

We believe that Cairo initiated a new stage in the United Nations system's handling of population problems. Implementing the agreements incorporated in the Programme of Action necessitates a study of how to enable the institutional machinery to cope with the new requirements. We must be prepared to consider initiatives along these lines.

We would like to highlight the fact that all participants made a major effort to harmonize different positions in the common interest. We think highly of the texts that were agreed, for they embody and integrate the different points of view of the international community on such sensitive subjects as family planning, the rights and health of women and the financing of the planned activities, to mention only a few of the subjects that posed the greatest difficulty.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken yesterday, I now call on the Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): The delegation of the Holy See has taken note of the report of the International Conference on Population and Development. I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly on this item and to comment on the Programme of Action.

It is well known that Catholic organizations are involved in a wide array of development activities as well as humanitarian assistance programmes throughout the world. These undertakings focus on education and basic health care, always considering their primary component, the human being and his or her integral development. Therefore, the Holy See is keenly interested in the issues which were addressed at the Conference.

Consistent with its own moral convictions and teachings, the Holy See ultimately associated itself, through a partial consensus, with selected chapters of the report, and supported specific sections in the document.

The Holy See notes that the International Conference on Population and Development affirmed the application of universally recognized human rights standards to all aspects of population programmes. While fundamental human rights represent a common good for all humanity on its path towards peace, it is necessary in this context to note clearly that when one speaks of rights one is actually concomitantly defining duties. The international community is given not only the priority, but also the duty, to promote and protect all human rights in a just and balanced manner. However, as the Programme of Action clearly states,

> "the International Conference on Population and Development does not create any new international human rights". *(A/CONF.171/13, para. 1.15)*

The majority of the principles set forth in the document make a substantial contribution to understanding the entire Programme of Action. The chapter on principles expresses, with greater specificity and clarity than any other chapter, the basic inspiration which guided the work of the Conference and must continue to guide its implementation. My delegation is pleased to find in the introductory paragraph of chapter II, and thus as a concept implied throughout the document, that the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action shall be done in each State

> "with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights." *(A/CONF.171/13, p.14)*

These points, as well as non-coercion, are central in the implementation of population-related policies.

The first four principles all address aspects of the human being, and this is done prior to referring to the role of the State. My delegation is pleased to see that the concept of the importance of the human being and its prioritization in all issues related to sustainable development, already enshrined in the Rio Declaration, is carried forward in the Programme of Action.

The Holy See delegation welcomes the Conference's linkage of population and development as an important focus of consideration, emphasizing the right to development in the principles when it states:

> "The right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights, and the human person is the central subject of development." *(ibid., p. 14)*

The Conference notes that population policies must be considered within the context of overall development. However, the Holy See had hoped for a more comprehensive treatment of the relationship between population and development, with appropriate attention being given to specific development strategies in which the developed nations would manifest a stronger commitment and establish some priorities. This would have addressed issues such as the transfer of technology and the results of progress in medicine, alleviation of external debt and development of new markets for developing nations.

The Holy See wishes to stress its support for that portion of the document which provides for strengthening the family. Indeed, the family is the basic unit of society and, as such, is entitled to comprehensive protection and support by Governments. The family belongs to the sacred heritage of humanity and to the future of the human race. But the family is based on marriage — a permanent, faithful, mutual relationship — between a man and a woman. It involves partnership and mutual respect and is committed to the bearing and rearing of children and the guidance of adolescents. However, the Programme of Action, in many instances, does not adequately take into consideration the concrete application of the rights and responsibilities of parents in the context of the family, and particularly their important continuing responsibilities as regards the guidance of adolescents. It is hoped that in the implementation of the Programme of Action the responsibility of States to respect parental rights and duties will be closely adhered to.

The Conference properly recognized that women must be full and equal participants in development. This means that women must also enjoy equal opportunity in education, primary health care, professional career choices and employment opportunities in order for them to meet their basic human needs and to exercise their human rights. It is hoped that a more objective treatment of women's true roles and responsibilities will be taken up in Beijing in 1995.

An important issue in the Programme of Action is that of reproductive health care. Expressing concern over the high rates of morbidity and mortality in many countries, the Programme of Action appropriately makes reduction of child and maternal mortality one of its primary objectives. My delegation continues to be concerned about the health of each and every human being, including his or her reproductive health. The Holy See's great concern about the unacceptable incidence of maternal death in various parts of the world is evidenced by its commitment to maintaining a vast network of health-care facilities and programmes run by Catholic organizations throughout the world. At the same time, however, the Holy See cannot, does not and will not accept abortion as a component of reproductive health care.

Throughout the Conference process, the Holy See made clear its grave concern regarding the treatment of the issue of abortion in the Programme of Action. The Holy See spoke strongly in favour of the value of every human life, including the life of the unborn child. The deliberate destruction of the unborn is inconsistent with respect for human life and puts in jeopardy all other human rights, of which the right to life is the very cornerstone. Any compromise of this most fundamental of all human rights is particularly dangerous as part of a social or demographic policy promoted by States, whose duty it is to protect life.

Although the Cairo Programme of Action has reconfirmed that abortion is not to be promoted as a method of family planning, it dangerously hints at condoning the legalization and provision of abortion services within the context of population-related policies. My delegation would like to see more concerted efforts emerge to make concrete those sections of the Programme of Action which urge that

> "Governments should take appropriate steps to help women avoid abortion". *(A/CONF.171/13, annex, para. 7.24)*

No new internationally recognized right to abortion can be implied by the document since the preamble, as noted earlier, states that the International Conference on Population and Development does not create any new international human rights.

The Holy See recognizes that sexuality is an important aspect of personal identity. It is not difficult to understand that sexuality finds its proper and deepest expression within a context of reciprocity. The Programme of Action, however, invokes a policy on sexuality that does not give due consideration to that dimension of reciprocity which is the expression of mutual love and decision-making within a stable, conjugal relationship but that, instead, presents an individualistic and permissive approach to sexual behaviour, even for adolescents, which undermines an appropriate understanding of human dignity and the moral responsibility of each person. A permissive attitude towards sexual behaviour undermines the family, parenthood and the well-being of the child and has a highly destabilizing effect on society as a whole.

While attention was often given to the rights of women and men, there was a notable absence of concern about the rights of children, except in the "Principles". My delegation firmly believes that every child, from the moment of conception, is a person in his or her own right, and thus deserves legal protection and support. At Cairo the Holy See reminded the international community that at the moment in which new human life is created there are no longer only two participants — man and woman — but a third, the child. That is why the expression "safe abortion" is ambiguous. Abortion is never safe for one of the persons involved. The child, already conceived, dies. Sadly, since children are the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society, they are easily exploited, marginalized, and even eliminated. If we are truly concerned about our future, then we must invest in our children.

Concerning the movement of peoples, the Holy See supported the chapters on international and internal migration, but would have preferred a consensus on a more firm commitment to the reunification of families.

The Holy See was pleased to take part in the International Conference on Population and Development, to express its position and to make efforts to forge a consensus with other nations. Some areas of disagreement remain, not only for the Holy See but for a substantial number of States whose large number of reservations to the document before us are a matter of record. The Holy See, while offering partial consensus, enumerated its difficulties with various wordings in the Programme of Action in its final statement at the Conference and in the Holy See's reservations to this document.

The Holy see hopes that all parties charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the Programme of Action will keep at the forefront of their endeavours respect for the dignity of all persons. Backed by such inspiration, one can be confident in the achievement of full solidarity for the integral development of all human beings.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1994, action on this item will be taken in the Second Committee.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 158.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.